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**THE OLD STONE CROSSES  
OF DORSET**







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# THE OLD STONE CROSSES OF DORSET

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND  
DESCRIPTIVE ARTICLES

BY

ALFRED POPE

ORIGINAL MEMBER OF THE DORSET NATURAL HISTORY AND  
ANTIQUARIAN FIELD CLUB; SOLICITOR OF THE  
SUPREME COURT; J.P. FOR DORSET

*ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS PLATES AND A  
KEY-MAP OF THE COUNTY*



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1906

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## PREFACE

**I**T is now some twelve years since I first became interested in the Old Stone Crosses of Dorset, when the restoration of the fifteenth-century cross in the Stratton churchyard was contemplated. I then read a paper on "Stratton Church and Village Cross" at a meeting of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club, which afterwards appeared in vol. xvi of its Proceedings, with a view to giving publicity to the matter.

Since then I have made the old stone crosses of Dorset a study, and a very interesting and absorbing one it has proved to be, and at the urgent request of several influential members of the club, I now put the information acquired at the service of the members of the Club and others who take an interest in these ancient stones.

I have had considerable difficulty in deciding on the arrangement of the several descriptive articles connected with these crosses. Dorset is not so rich in old crosses as the counties further west, into which

Woodspeed 13 Apr. 1943

they were introduced, with Christianity, at a much earlier date.

The remains of sixty-one crosses only, in some cases mere fragments, are all I have been able to discover in this county. In the county of Somerset Mr. Pooley tells us he has found over two hundred to describe and delineate; and in Devon and Cornwall there are the remains of a much larger number, many of very ancient date, some before the Saxon and Norman eras, whereas in Dorset I have only found one, viz., that at Todbere, of the Saxon period, the remainder being mostly erected in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

I have thought it best, therefore, for the convenience of my readers and to facilitate reference, to arrange the descriptive articles relating to these crosses in alphabetical order rather than in order of date, which some would consider the more correct arrangement.

The reader may think that in some instances the descriptions have been somewhat encumbered by measurements and detail, but he may be assured of the accuracy of these as well as of the other parts of the descriptive matter, as I have personally visited almost every stone described, and taken the measurements with my own hand. This

I considered necessary, as the photographs from which the plates have been taken are not of course to scale. These plates, however, convey a true impression of the subject; they preserve its main features and are of the greatest help in illustrating the text.

I must crave the reader's indulgence if in any of my descriptive articles I have gone astray on any technical points,—I am no architect;—but if by writing these essays I can induce him to take an interest in these ancient crosses and preserve their remains, I shall be amply repaid for the trouble I have taken in describing them.

It has been somewhat difficult to locate the remains of the many stone crosses scattered up and down the county, but I venture to think that, with the exception of crosses on tombs and monumental slabs, and church gable crosses, which are so numerous that I could not include them in a work of this size, none have been omitted.

I have to thank the clergy, gentry, and others in the county, for the ready and able assistance they have rendered me in my work, and the courtesy with which they have responded to my sometimes troublesome inquiries, to many of whom I have referred in my descriptive articles, and I hardly think they



would wish their names repeated here. I have received great technical assistance and considerable help in my labours from the study of Mr. C. Pooley's admirable work on the "Stone Crosses of Somerset," Mr. I. T. Bright's "Ancient Crosses and Antiquities of Cornwall," and Rimmer's "Stone Crosses of England," and gathered much useful information from the Rev. Elias Owen's work on the "Old Stone Crosses of Wales," and from Hutchins's "History of Dorset."

I must thank those ladies and gentlemen who have rendered me great help by taking most excellent photographs of my many subjects, from which the plates in the volume have been reproduced.

Some may say that these photogravure plates, which are quite works of art, are more costly than a work of this character would warrant, but the great importance of their being permanent must not be forgotten, and I was unable to obtain a guarantee that any of the cheaper processes would prove so.

I have introduced, as a frontispiece, a sketch map of the county, with the positions of the several crosses marked in red, so that they may be easily found, should any of my readers have the curiosity to visit them.

ALFRED POPE.

DORCHESTER,  
*April, 1906.*

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# THE OLD STONE CROSSES OF DORSET

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE CROSS was from the earliest times adopted by Christians as an emblem of their faith. It was, Mr. Blight tells us, in his admirable work on the "Ancient Crosses and Antiquities of Cornwall," probably introduced into England as a Christian symbol with Christianity itself, which is supposed to have been about the year A.D. 60.

St. Patrick landed in Ireland in A.D. 432. The conversion of the Irish to Christianity took place shortly afterwards, for as early as A.D. 490 Ireland was named the "Isle of Saints."

There is evidence that crosses were erected in Ireland soon after this date, and as missionaries were sent from Ireland to Cornwall and the west of England, it is reasonable to suppose that they caused

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crosses to be erected in those counties in which they ministered. We are told that St. Wilfrid, who was Archbishop of York at the beginning of the eighth century, travelled about his diocese with a large body of monks and workmen attending him, amongst whom were cutters in stone, who made crosses and erected them on the spots which St. Wilfrid consecrated to the worship of God; and there is little doubt that his example was followed by the bishops and abbots of later periods.

These early crosses were mostly of the Latin form, one straight body laid at right angles upon another, having the shaft below the transverse bar longer than the part which rises above the transverse bar, and was the sign or emblem of the Christian religion, as being a representation of the instrument of punishment on which Jesus Christ suffered death from the Jews. The Greek cross, which has its arms at right angles and of equal length, was not introduced into Western Europe until a later date, probably about 1050, when the schism arose between the Latin and Greek Churches. The Greek crosses in this country were probably erected during this contention. Then there is the St. Andrew's cross or *Crux decussata*, thus, X—and the cross of St. Anthony with no member above the transverse bar, thus, T. The almost

universal plan upon which cathedrals and churches in this country are built is the Latin cross, at once pre-eminently characteristic and significant of the Christian faith, the form of the Greek cross being rarely adopted.

Having briefly reviewed the introduction of the cross into this country, and its variety of form, let us consider the very many occasions and diversity of ways in which the cross, in various modifications of its form, would naturally be adopted.

The Right Honourable T. Pemberton Leigh in delivering judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the case *Westerton v. Liddell and Horne*, said: "A cross was used as a symbol of Christianity for two or three centuries before the Reformation, and has continued ever since to be used as an ensign of honour, as an ornament both of buildings and persons, ecclesiastical and civil, public and private, without any relation to superstitious or even to religious usage."

There were Memorial Crosses, Churchyard or Preaching Crosses, Market and Village Crosses, Boundary Crosses, Weeping Crosses and Pilgrim Crosses. Let us shortly consider each one of these in its order.

*Memorial Crosses.*—These were usually erected by

the wayside, or in some city, town or village, and were of varied form and importance, designed to commemorate some memorable incident on the spot where it took place: such are the beautiful and justly famous Queen Eleanor crosses, originally nine, some say twelve, in number, designed to mark the places where the funeral procession of the first Edward's first consort halted for rest, executed and erected between 1291 and 1294. Of these only three remain, viz., Geddington, Northampton and Waltham. And latterly doubts have been entertained as to Geddington forming one of the series. Monumental crosses upon stone coffin lids or sculptural slabs in low relief or incised lines may properly be included in this class, as well as memorial crosses in churchyards, a good example of which may be found in the fine cross erected in the churchyard at Rampisham in the sixteenth century to the memory of Porter, a former lord of the manor.

*Preaching Crosses.*—These were usually erected in churchyards, and were used, as their name implies, for preaching from, although the village cross was often used for this purpose, preaching friars frequently addressing the people therefrom.

These crosses were often placed near the south or chief entrance to the church, suggestive of due pre-

paration previously to entering the sacred building. Closely connected with these were the crosses which adorned the gables of churches, of which there was an endless variety, some being of great beauty, and elegant in design.

*Market Crosses*, as their name implies, were usually erected in the market place of a town, and were often open arched and vaulted structures, sometimes of considerable size. Often on market and fair days a preaching friar would address the people from the market cross, reminding them of the sacredness of bargains, and telling both buyers and sellers to be true and just in all their dealings, and that "no one ought to go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter."

*The Village Cross* was less pretentious, and was usually to be found on the village green, where also was the maypole. From these proclamations were made, banns of marriage published, market tolls and dues collected, around them *fêtes* and fairs held, and by them usually stood the village stocks.

*Boundary Crosses* were important in marking the limits of parishes and manors, and the superstitious reverence paid to the cross in the middle ages assured their not being removed or tampered with.

*Weeping Crosses* were erected for the use of those

who were compelled to do penance by the parish clergyman.

*Pilgrim Crosses* were set up on the highways and served as guide-posts to the different monasteries, oratories, baptistries, and other religious foundations, and as excitement to holy feelings before reaching these places of worship.

The rich traveller, too, often deposited alms at the foot of these crosses for the succour of the poor and distressed wayfarer who might follow him.

Let us now consider by whom these ancient stone crosses were erected. In this beautiful county of Dorset, truly described by an old traveller as "both for rider and for abider one of the fairest counties in England," I have only been able to discover the fragments of one which can have any pretensions of being of Saxon times. This, which has been much over-restored, and is fully described in this work, may be seen in the churchyard at Todbere. The others are, for the most part, of a type erected in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, viz., a calvary of from two to five steps, a socket-stone, into which is leaded an octagonal or square shaft, surmounted with a plain Latin cross, or a niched canopy or tabernacle, upon which would be fixed a Latin cross of smaller dimensions.

These crosses are of the usual churchyard and village type. There were market crosses at Blandford, Milton Abbas, Shaftesbury and Sherborne, but these have long since disappeared.

On reference to the sketch map at the beginning of this volume, it will be seen that the crosses in this county follow certain well-defined tracks. There is a line of crosses up the Stour Valley from Wimborne to Shaftesbury, another from Shaftesbury to Milton Abbas, and thence to Cerne Abbas, and another from Sherborne to Cerne Abbas, clearly indicating the circuit taken by the preaching friars, who went from abbey to abbey teaching and ministering to the people.

It will also be found in almost every instance of a cross being erected in a village or churchyard, that the manor, or a part thereof, originally belonged to some monastic or ecclesiastical body, the presumption being that these crosses were erected by or at the cost of such bodies. And when we consider the enormous amount of property possessed by these religious bodies, the annual revenues of which are put by Mr. C. Ransome, in his "History of England," at no less than £6,500,000 in present money at the time of their suppression in Henry VIII's reign, we cannot wonder that they found no time nor pains nor labour too

great to bestow on these sacred symbols of their faith, their general intent being, Milner says, in his "History of Winchester," "to excite public homage to the religion of Christ crucified, and to inspire men with a sense of morality and piety amidst the ordinary transactions of life." The rents and tolls, too, due to the Abbot as lord of the manor, were often collected at these crosses, and doles distributed to the poor therefrom.

Thus much for the erection of our beautiful mediæval stone crosses and their uses; now let us consider the causes which led to their mutilation or destruction. There can be little doubt that their death-knell was tolled at the Reformation, and although they survived by nearly a century the suppression of the smaller religious houses by Henry VIII in 1536 and 1539, yet at this period so great a shock was given to the veneration of the cross that it was allowed to stand on sufferance only. Valuable and movable crosses and crucifixes within the churches were first removed or destroyed, the destruction or defacement of those without followed later.

During the reign of Queen Mary cruel and strenuous efforts were made to re-establish the Roman Catholic religion in England, and to restore the cross to the place of reverence and honour in which it was for-

merly held. To this the Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford, erected to the memory of those bishops who, with others, suffered death at the stake, at her hands, for the sake of the Protestant religion, bears testimony. This memorial is built after the model of the Queen Eleanor Cross at Waltham, from the designs of the late Sir G. G. Scott, R.A., and was erected by public subscription in the year 1841.

There is ample evidence, too, that good Queen Bess did not desire the destruction of these out-door symbols of the Christian faith, for she ordered the cross in Cheapside to be restored, and in 1560 issued a proclamation "against the defacing of monuments in churches," which made it illegal to break down or deface ancient monuments erected in churches and other places to the memory of the dead.

The cross, however, as an object of superstitious reverence, could not survive the great change in the religion of the nation, and eventually, in 1643, during the first civil war between Charles I and his Parliament, an Ordinance was, at the instance of Cromwell and the Puritan party who doubtless hoped thereby to eradicate superstition out of the land, passed by the Lords and Commons without the authority or sanction of the King, for the removing and defacing all crosses in or upon all churches and chapels and



other *open places*, which would include each type of cross above enumerated.

As this Ordinance is extremely interesting, and its execution has had a marked effect upon the features of this country, it is here set out in full so far as it relates to crosses, the subject of this work.

Die Lunae 28 Augusti 1643.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE LORDS AND COMMONS, ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT, for the utter demolishing, removing, and taking away of all monuments of Superstition or Idolatry out of all Churches and Chappels and *open places* within this Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales.

Before the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1643.

Whereby after reciting that the Lords and Commons in Parliament taking into their serious considerations, how well pleasing it is to God and conduceable to the Blessed Reformation of His Worship, so much desired by both Houses of Parliament, that all monuments of Superstition or Idolatry should be removed and abolished—It was Ordained inter alia, That all Crucifixes, Crosses, in or upon all Churches Chappels or other places of public Prayer, Church-yards or other places to any of the said Churches or Chappels or places of public Prayer belonging, or *in any open place*—Should before the said 1<sup>st</sup> day of November 1643 be taken away and defaced, and none of the like thereafter permitted in or upon any such Church Chappel or other place as aforesaid. And it was further ordained, that all and every such removal, taking

away and defacing such Crucifixes and crosses as aforesaid should be done by and at the expense of the Churchwarden or Churchwardens of every such parish for the time being respectively and in case of default for the space of 21 days after the said 1<sup>st</sup> day of November 1643 under a penalty of 40s. to the use of the poor of the said Parish, and if default should be made after the 1<sup>st</sup> day of December 1643, Then one Justice of the Peace for the County or Town where such default should be made, should upon Information &c. Cause or procure the premises to be performed at the cost and charges of such person or persons making default, or of the Inhabitants of every such parish as aforesaid who were thereby appointed to bear the same. Provided that this Ordinance or anything therein contained shall not extend to any image, picture, or coat of armes in glasse, Stone, or otherwise, in any church &c. or *public place* set up or graven only for a monument of any king, prince or nobleman or other dead person which hath not been commonly reputed or taken for a saint.

Under this exception three at least of the beautiful crosses set up as a memorial to Queen Eleanor, and other monuments to the dead, have been preserved to us, and it may be reasonable to conjecture that the elegant cross at Stalbridge, which is the only one of that type left intact in this county, owes its preservation to this proviso, but to whose memory it was erected I have been unable to ascertain.

It is needless to say that this order was carried out

with all the Puritan bigotry and fury. Local Committees were formed in the various counties for the purpose of seeing that the orders of Parliament were strictly and rigorously enforced, the result being that all the fine crosses which had been the pride and ornament of our towns, churchyards and village greens were ruthlessly destroyed or defaced, leaving future generations to lament the destruction of these memorials of the religion of our forefathers in bygone days.

For two centuries or more the remains of the old stone crosses of this country remained as this Ordinance left them, except so far as the ravages of time and the requirements of the builder and roadmaker went towards completing the work of destruction the Puritans had commenced, and it is only within the last quarter of a century that antiquaries, architects and others have begun to take an interest in their preservation and restoration, not now, however, as objects of superstitious reverence, but as "relics of past ages, and memorials indicating the customs, manners and condition of the arts amongst our ancestors."

To those who would undertake the restoration or re-erection of these monuments of antiquity, or "emblems of Christian faith," as the Right Honourable T. Pemberton Leigh calls them, I would say, with

the Rev. W. M. Barnes ("Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club," vol. xii, p. 36), in his hints "On the proper Restoration of Ancient Buildings":

Do not undertake restoration or reconstruction unless the same is absolutely necessary to prevent decay. Preserve the main features and retain as much of the old work as possible. Do not attempt to imitate the old work, but let your new work be unmistakable twentieth-century work. Do not re-cut any of the old stone to make it look fresh and to match the new, but use as much of the old in its existing state as it is possible to work in.

My object in describing and delineating these ancient stone crosses has been to induce people to take an interest in them as relics of a past age and emblems of the Christian faith; not as objects of superstitious reverence, but rather as monuments of antiquity, with a view to their being preserved as far as possible in their present state and condition, and that some record may be retained of those which it is not possible or desirable to restore, and which in course of time will totally disappear, as so many have already been allowed to do.

## BATCOMBE DOWN

### THE "CROSS-AND-HAND" STONE

**T**HIS is an exceedingly interesting and unique relic of antiquity. It stands on a lonely tableland above the Vale of Blackmore, between High Stoy and Bubb Down Hills, on the left-hand side of the road leading from Evershot Station, over Batcombe Down, to Dogberry-Gate and Minterne Magna, about a hundred yards to the east of the turning to Up-Cerne and Cerne Abbas. This position commands, in clear weather, views that extend from the English to the Bristol Channel.

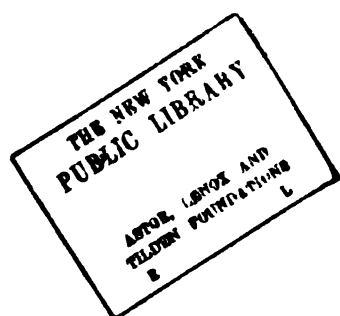
The stone consists of a round smooth tapering shaft, which, together with the abacus of the mutilated capital at the top, measures three feet eight inches in height from the ground, it girths thirty-four inches at the base, thirty-two inches in the middle, and twenty-eight inches immediately under the roll moulding

THE "CROSS-AND-HAND" STONE  
BATCOMBE DOWN









beneath the capital; the moulding itself measuring one and a quarter inch deep. There is a similar moulding on the south side; about four inches from the ground line; this loses itself on the north side, where the stone is somewhat flattened several inches from the base, indicating that it might, at one time, have been attached to some building. The space between the upper and the lower moulding measures thirty-two inches.

In the accompanying plate the north side of the stone only is shown, so that the lower moulding is not seen.

The capital shows some kind of carving on the south side, said to represent a hand, but it has been much damaged on the north side, where no carving appears. There is a government bench mark at the bottom of the south side.

The pillar is of a hard spar-like stone resembling marble or gray granite, being much rubbed by cattle at the upper part, and covered with moss and lichen below; it has been said to be of Purbeck marble, but this seems doubtful.

The origin of the stone can be only conjecture. It has stood in its present position from time immemorial, and numerous local traditions as to its origin are preserved.

It possibly once formed the upper part of the tapering shaft of a cross surmounted by a ball-shaped abacus, upon which was mounted a canopy or cross. Its age is extremely difficult to determine, but if the above suggestion be correct, it would be late fourteenth-century work. The roll mouldings and the ball-shaped abacus would point to this; or it may be Roman, having features in common with the pillars found amongst the remains of the Roman temple on Jordan Hill, near Weymouth, and to that found in the remains of the Roman villa at Fifehead Neville, and set up by Major Dugdale in the grounds of the Manor House. The nature of the stone or marble from which it is worked, if imported, would favour this view.

Mr. Thomas Hardy, in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," gives the following description of this stone pillar, from which he says the spot, "the scene of a miracle, or murder, or both," took its name of "Cross-and-Hand."

A strange rude monolith, from a stratum unknown in any local quarry, on which was roughly carved a human hand.

And later he makes the rustic, in reply to Tess's inquiries as to whether it was a cross, say:

Cross—no; 'twere not a cross! 'Tis a thing of ill-omen, Miss. It was put up in wuld times by the relations of a male-

factor who was tortured there by nailing his hand to a post, and afterwards hung. The bones lie underneath. They say he sold his soul to the Devil, and that he walks at times.

Mr. Charles G. Harper, in his "Hardy Country," writes :

The history and meaning of this lonely pillar, on the solitary ridgeway road, are unknown. Thought by some to mark the old-time bounds of property under the sway of the Abbot of Cerne, others have considered it to be the relic of a wayside cross, while others yet have held it to be a place of meeting of the tenants and feudatories of the old Abbey, and the hollow in the stone to have been the receptacle for their tribute.

Amongst the other stories accounting for the origin of this pillar, that of "The Lost Pyx," which Mr. Hardy has put into verse, is probably the most interesting. It will be found in his "Poems Past and Present" (Macmillan and Co.), and by the kind permission of the author it is here presented to the reader.

## THE LOST PYX

### A MÆDIEVAL LEGEND

Some say the spot is banned ; that the pillar Cross-and-Hand  
Attests to a deed of hell ;  
But of else than of bale is the mystic tale  
That ancient Vale-folk tell.

Ere Cernel's Abbey ceased hereabout there dwelt a priest,  
(In later life sub-prior  
Of the brotherhood there, whose bones are now bare  
In the field that was Cernel choir).

One night in his cell at the foot of yon dell  
The priest heard a frequent cry :  
"Go, father, in haste to the cot on the waste,  
And shrive a man waiting to die."

Said the priest in a shout to the caller without,  
"The night howls, the tree-trunks bow ;  
One may barely by day track so rugged a way,  
And can I then do so now ?"

No further word from the dark was heard,  
And the priest moved never a limb ;  
And he slept and dreamed ; till a Visage seemed  
To frown from Heaven at him.

In a sweat he arose ; and the storm shrieked shrill,  
And smote as in savage joy ;  
While High-Stoy trees twanged to Bubb-Down Hill,  
And Bubb-Down to High-Stoy.

There seemed not a holy thing in hail,  
Nor shape of light or love,  
From the Abbey north of Blackmore Vale  
To the Abbey south thereof.

Yet he plodded thence through the dark immense,  
And with many a stumbling stride,  
Through copse and briar climbed nigh and nigher  
To the cot and the sick man's side.

When he would have unslung the vessels uphung  
To his arm in the steep ascent,  
He made loud moan : the Pyx was gone  
Of the Blessed Sacrament.

Then in dolorous dread he beat his head :  
" No earthly prize or pelf  
Is the thing I've lost in tempest tossed,  
But the Body of Christ Himself ! "

He thought of the Visage his dream revealed,  
And turned towards whence he came,  
Hands groping the ground along foot-track and field,  
And head in a heat of shame.

Till here on the hill, betwixt vill and vill,  
He noted a clear straight ray  
Stretching down from the sky to a spot hard by,  
Which shone with the light of day.

And gathered around the illumined ground  
Were common beasts and rare,  
All kneeling at gaze, and in pause profound  
Attent on an object there.

'Twas the Pyx, unharmed 'mid the circling rows  
Of Blackmore's hairy throng,  
Whereof were oxen, sheep, and does,  
And hares from the brakes among ;

And badgers gray, and conies keen,  
And squirrels of the tree,  
And many a member seldom seen  
Of Nature's family.

The ireful winds that scoured and swept  
Through coppice, clump, and dell.  
Within that holy circle slept  
Calm as in hermit's cell.

Then the priest bent likewise to the sod  
And thanked the Lord of Love,  
And blessed Mary, Mother of God,  
And all the Saints above.

And turning straight with his priceless freight,  
He reached the dying one,  
Whose passing sprite had been stayed for the rite  
Without which bliss hath none.

And when by grace the priest won place,  
And served the Abbey well,  
He reared *this stone* to mark where shone  
That midnight miracle.

The plate is from a photograph by Mr. Clive  
Holland.









ROBINSON MEMORIAL  
BEAMINSTER

## BEAMINSTER

**T**HIS ancient market town, situate on the River Brit, formerly possessed its market cross. It is referred to in some manuscript notes by John Banger Russell of Beminster (*sic*), Attorney-at-Law, written about the year 1780, now in the possession of Mr. Richard Hine, who has been good enough to furnish me with the following extract:

In the middle of the town, near the shambles, there was a handsome cross, adorned with carved work, with a high ascent of steps, which some time ago was removed. The place whereon it stood still has the privilege of being exempt from the Tolls and Customs of the market. Underneath there is a reservoir of water which will perhaps preserve the remembrance of it.

No mention of this cross is made in the first edition of Hutchins (1774), but in the second edition (1796), it is noted that the cross was wantonly destroyed about forty years earlier (vol. i, p. 437). It is also

mentioned in the third edition. The base is said to have existed within living memory, but even this has now totally disappeared.

On the site of the cross now stands a handsome memorial, recently erected by Mr. Vincent Robinson of Parnham, to his sister, Elizabeth Julia Robinson.

It is of Ham Hill stone, square in plan with a central shaft, and buttressed piers surmounted by pinnacles at the angles.

The central shaft with its surmounting pinnacle measures twenty feet in height, and the basement sixteen feet in width.

In design it follows somewhat the market cross at Cheddar, without the embattled parapet, and is square instead of hexagonal.

It has a stone-tile roof.

The plate, which is contributed by Mr. Robinson, is from a photograph by Mr. R. Hine.

## BLANDFORD FORUM

**T**HE ancient market town of Blandford formerly possessed its market cross.

Hutchins says it stood in the centre of the open space at the west end of the market place, and there butter and cheese were sold.

In an "Inventorie of the Implements belonging to the Corporation of the Towne maid 1644," mention is made of certain scales, "which the cheese was weighed with at *the Cross*." And this old name for the spot still lingers in the town.

The cross, or what then remained of it, seems to have been removed about the time of the great fire here in 1731. Some few years ago, pending some excavations which were being made in the market square, near the site of the cross, some worked stones were discovered which are said to have originally formed part of the old market cross.

These may now be seen piled together in a small inclosure near the Rectory.

Amongst them are some moulded plinth stones (Ham Hill), which may have formed part of the base. Also a stone with the lower parts of two figures carved upon it. These would appear to represent St. Mary and St. John, and may have formed a part of the canopied head of the cross, standing in one of the niches on either side of the Holy Rood.

A similar representation may be seen on the east side of the canopied head of the cross, at Wedmore, Somerset.









**CHURCHYARD CROSS  
BRADFORD ABBAS**

## BRADFORD ABBAS

**T**HE Abbots of Sherborne were the ancient lords of this manor, it having been granted to the church of Sherborne by King Alfred, A.D. 933, and the handsome Perpendicular church dedicated to Saint Mary was built by Abbot Bradford of Sherborne in 1484.

Probably the very fine Perpendicular cross, the remains of which now stand in the churchyard, some eighteen feet from the north-west buttress of the tower, was built about the same time. It is of the same stone as the church, viz. freestone from Hamdon Hill, below Yeovil, and is in a very fair state of preservation.

It is constructed on an octagonal plan with a calvary of two steps, a massive square socket, and seven feet six inches remain of the original handsome octagonal shaft. On the west face of the shaft is a niched and canopied male figure, two feet four inches in height,

standing in a corbel, much defaced, but sufficient is left of the clothing to favour the conjecture that it may be that of St. John the Baptist. On the east face a female canopied figure, possibly that of the Virgin Mary, to whom the church is dedicated, is represented, and on the north and south sides are indications of crocketing and of the fixings of other figures.

The shaft is leaded into the mortise, which is fifteen inches square.

The socket, which is cut from one solid block of stone, set up on a deep moulded plinth four feet four inches square, is octagonal on its upper bed, squared by four angle shafts, with caps and bases, on the tops of which may be seen the iron dowels by which figures or ornaments were fixed to the shafts. On the four sides of the socket are sculptured panels; on the west side a quatrefoil with a figure (possibly an angel) in the centre.

On the east side, a quatrefoil with a rose in the centre, and on the north and south sides are quatrefoils with blank shields in their centres.

It has a good moulded weather drip.

The basement, which is octagonal, and measures four feet on each face, and one foot nine inches in height, has a deep projecting weather drip, and a

good set-off. It is faced with solid worked stone, but is much worn and out of repair.

The step, which stands on the basement and supports the socket, is also octagonal, measuring thirty inches on each face, and is twenty inches deep; it has a good moulded weather drip, with a fillet, and a deep plinth.

This cross, which must have formed a very beautiful and striking object, is of the same type as those at Stalbridge and Rampisham, and was doubtless erected about the same date, viz. in the fifteenth century. Judging from its position to the north-west of the church, it was probably a preaching cross, and the Vicar, the Rev. Gordon Wickham, informs me that it is still used for preaching from at Rogation services. The plate is from a photograph taken by the Vicar.

### THE VILLAGE CROSS

The following extract is from the second edition of Hutchins, published 1815.

Till within a few years an arched stone building called the Cross (in form of the conduit at Sherbourne, but of smaller dimensions) stood in the centre of the village. It was taken down by the overseer, to the great regret of many of his neighbours, without any advantage to the parish.

There is no trace of this cross now left.

## BRIDPORT

**T**HE stone represented on the plate opposite stands outside the western wall of the south porch of the parish church, which is situate on the west side of South Street, and is dedicated to Saint Mary.

It is worked in one solid block of hard coarse-grained freestone from Hamdon Hill, and measures four feet nine inches in height from the apex of the angle at the top to the plinth of the base. It is three feet in width at the upper part, and three feet six inches at the base. The stone upon which it is set up measures fifteen inches in thickness. There is a deep canopied niche in the centre which might formerly have held the Holy Rood, or the Blessed Virgin, or it might have been a reliquary for the reception of some holy relic. That it was strongly guarded may be gathered from the dowel holes at the sides, into which the iron bars inclosing it were leaded.

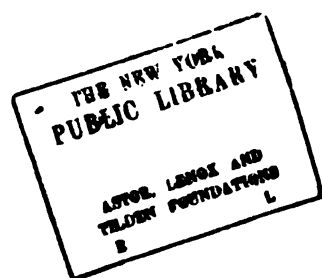
On either side is a canopied and niched figure, so

**SAINT ANDREW'S CROSS  
BRIDPORT**









much defaced that it is impossible to do more than conjecture whom they may have been originally intended to represent.

That on the right is a female figure, possibly Saint Mary, that on the left appears to be wearing a crown or a mitre, and to be holding a sceptre or a crosier, and may have represented either a king or a bishop, probably the latter.

There is a figure at the foot, apparently an angel, which appears to have formed a pedestal or corbel supporting the shrine. Above the shrine was carving of some kind, but the stone is so much worn and defaced that it is difficult to say what it originally represented. It might have been a cross. The whole is framed by a bold deep-cut ogee moulding. On the top of the gable has been fixed the remains of a Latin cross of a red sandstone, which is of a different date and character, and in no way connected with this sculptured stone.

To the front of the base stone is fixed a stone tablet, upon which is carved the following inscription :

This Stone was formerly part of the  
Chapel of St. Andrew(s). At the High  
Cross, which was consecrated A.D. 1362.

Destroyed A.D. 1798.

This Stone was replaced here, A.D. 1883.

The above is the history of the stone as recorded on its base, in support of which the following facts may be noted. The Chapel of St. Andrew appears to have been built about the year 1360. It stood, according to Hutchins (first edition, 1774), at the cross roads formed by the meeting of the three principal streets, East, West, and South Streets, and in Hutchins's time was used for various secular purposes, part as a Sessions House, over which was a free school, part as a gaol for criminals, and part was in ruins. It had a low tower, tiled. Part of the chancel remained, and served as a clock tower.

In 1785 the whole of these buildings were taken down, and the present commodious block of Municipal Buildings erected.

The stone, the subject of this paper, which at the time formed part of the chapel, was removed and erected in the garden of the present Rectory, where it was standing during the incumbency of the Rev. Robert Broadley, M.A., Rector from 1829 to 1851, whose grandson, Mr. A. M. Broadley, of Bradpole, the joint author with the Rev. R. G. Bartelot, M.A. of "The three Dorset Captains at Trafalgar," informs the writer that he well remembers the stone, and that at that time the small Latin cross above described formed no part of it. In 1883 it was removed to

**St. Mary's Churchyard and re-erected in its present position.**

**The plate is from a photograph by Mr. W. L. Stephens.**

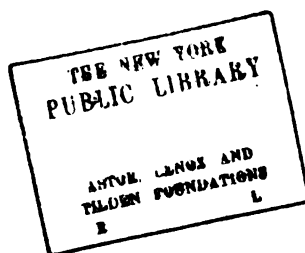
## CATTISTOCK

**T**HE upper portion only of an ancient cross, the arms having been broken off, ornamented with rude sculpture of foliage interlaced, and geometrical patterns, may be seen in the church, fixed in a recess on the north side of the sanctuary.

This stone, together with other curious fragments, was discovered in the masonry of the walls of the old church during the work of rebuilding in 1857. Hutchins says they may be the remains of headstones of the Saxon era (third edition, vol. iv, p. 13).

There is a large slab of Purbeck marble with an incised *cross* upon it, built into the wall in the south aisle. It was discovered in 1857, lying on its face some inches below the soil, in the Chantmarle aisle.

It is very ancient, and probably was the upper part or lid of a stone coffin which contained the body of one of the early Rectors or founders of the church. See "Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club," vol. xxiii, p. lvi.









**CROSS AT CERNE ABBAS**

## CERNE ABBAS

**A** GOOD example of an early fifteenth-century preaching cross may be seen in that portion of the Parish burial ground which is said to have formerly been the graveyard of the old Abbey.

This ground is some distance from the church, but within the precincts of the grounds of the 'Abbey, and not far from that noble entrance to the old Abbey known as the "Abbot's Gateway," and immediately behind that most interesting early Perpendicular building with its quaint oriel window, which is said to have been the guest house to the Abbey.

What remains of this ancient cross consists of a massive equal-sided octagonal socket, boldly chamfered round its upper bed, measuring one foot six inches on each face and one foot eight inches deep, and the stump of a plain octagonal tapering shaft, two feet three inches high and fifteen inches in diameter at the base, worked out of a rectangular block of stone, the base

of which is fitted into the seventeen inch square mortise of the socket, and run with lead.

On the top of this shaft is a cavity into which the dowel for fixing the upper part of the shaft was leaded. There is a deep drill-hole on the east side of the socket. The whole is of a hard coarse-grained red sandstone, probably from Hamdon Hill.

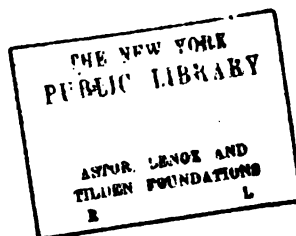
It is exceedingly doubtful if these remains stand in their original position.

Crosses of this type usually had a calvary of two or three steps with a basement. It is evident that these steps do not now exist, as graves have been dug almost close to the socket, and no trace of them has been discovered. The socket is set up on a foundation of masonry, with a massive plinth.

Quantities of worked stones, mostly Ham Hill, are continually being dug up in the burial ground, these, at one time, doubtless formed part of the Abbey buildings.

It is curious that a town of such importance as Cerne Abbas must have been during the middle ages, should not have possessed its market cross, but the writer has been unable to find any tradition of its ever having had one. Might not the remains above described originally have formed part of the market cross?

The plate is from a photograph by Miss Hilda Pope.









CHURCHYARD CROSS  
CHESELBORNE

## CHESELBORNE

**T**HE cross which stands in the churchyard, on the north-east side of the north porch, must have been an exceedingly handsome type of an early fourteenth-century preaching cross.

It consists of a calvary of two unusually deep steps, a socket, and the remains of a tapering square shaft. The stump of the shaft, which is set diagonally with the socket and run with lead, measures four feet three inches in height, and is thirteen inches square at the base, tapering to about ten inches at the top where broken off. There is a roll at each of the four angles interrupted by horizontal mouldings about three feet from the base. It is a monolith hewn out of a solid block of Ham Hill stone. The socket is of the same stone, very massive, measuring three feet square on its upper bed, by sixteen inches deep, and is set on a plinth four and a half inches deep, it is boldly broached at the angles, in order to bring it square with the diagonal setting of the shaft.

The basement step, which is twenty-four inches deep and fifteen inches in width on its upper face, has a deep projecting moulded drip, and a bold plinth. The bench and plinth are of Ham Hill stone, the centre part of the step being made up of some local limestone. The second step is twenty inches deep and thirteen inches wide, and has a good weather drip and set-off, both of Ham Hill stone, the centre stones being local. The cross has been allowed to fall into decay, being overgrown with ivy, the roots of which have forced themselves between the joints of the masonry, hastening its destruction. On regarding this fine old relic of a past age one can but be reminded of the lines from

## THE IVY BOWER

I stood beneath the castle wall  
And marked the ivy-bower  
That, fragrant in its Autumn bloom,  
Wreathed round the mouldering tower.

The plant insinuates its roots  
To rend the ruined wall,  
And yet, with close and treacherous grasp,  
Suspends awhile its fall.

I mus'd upon its ancient strength,  
Its hastening dissolution :  
And thought upon the ivy friends  
Who prop our Constitution.

The stones, too, have got covered with moss and lichen which adds to their venerable appearance, and the ruta-muraria and spleenwort ferns, growing in the crevices and joints of the masonry, give the remains quite an unique though somewhat weird appearance.

The Abbess of Shaftesbury was the ancient patron of the benefice, and doubtless the erection of so important a cross had some connection with the Abbey of Shaston.

There is an ancient dole table on the west side of the north entrance, but it does not appear that alms have been distributed there from within living memory.

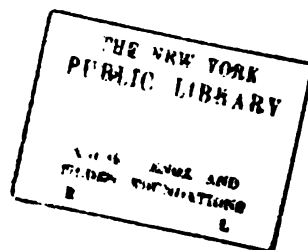
The plate is from a photograph by Gillingham, Stickland.

## CHILDE OKEFORD

**O**N the open space at the cross roads in the centre of the village, formerly the village green, now known as "The Cross," is a huge block of green sandstone, which measures in its upper bed thirty-four inches square, and is sixteen inches deep. This stone does not appear to have been worked as a socket, there being no sign of a mortise or cavity of any kind for fixing a shaft, and the usual broaching is absent.

There is therefore no ground for supposing that it ever formed the socket or other part of the ancient village cross which might formerly have stood upon this site. The basin-like depression in the top of the stone might have been a dole-hole.

There is a tradition, for which I am indebted to the Rector, the Rev. Canon Brymer, that the stone was used some ninety years since as a stand on which one Mary Saint was whipped for continually stealing hurdles.









**CHURCHYARD CROSS  
COMPTON ABBAS**

## COMPTON ABBAS

**A** CHURCHYARD cross of which the basement, two steps, the socket, and eighteen inches of the original shaft are left, may be seen in the old churchyard at East Compton. It stands near the tower of the old church, which was left standing when the new church was built in 1868, on a more convenient site at West Compton, close to the main road from Blandford to Shaftesbury.

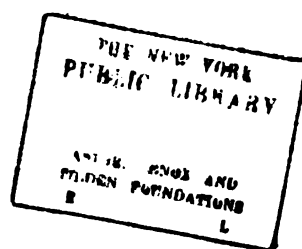
These remains, which are of Ham Hill stone, are in a very dilapidated condition, over-run with ivy and covered with moss and lichen. The basement, which is seven feet six inches square and one foot ten inches deep, has a bold weather drip, and a set-off at the ground line. The second step is five feet ten inches square and fourteen inches deep, with no drip or set-off.

The socket, which is a solid block of stone, nineteen inches square by nineteen inches high, is raised

on a splayed plinth, seven inches deep and surmounted with the stump of a shaft eighteen inches high, and twelve inches square at the base, mortised into the socket with lead. The top of this fragment is iron-bound to prevent splitting.

The work is probably early fourteenth century.

The manor was formerly held under the Abbey of Shaftesbury, the Abbess being the patron of the living, but at the Dissolution (36 Henry VIII) it was granted with the advowson to Sir Thomas Arundel.







VILLAGE CROSS  
CORFE CASTLE

## CORFE CASTLE

**T**HAT this highly interesting and most ancient of market towns, though now a mere village, formerly possessed its fine old fourteenth-century market cross, there is ample evidence. By an inquisition taken at Corfe Castle on Monday next after the Feast of St. Scholastica the Virgin (Feb. 10th), 4 Richard II, 1381, by order of the King, it was found, by a jury duly summoned, *inter alia*:

That the whole Isle of Purbeck is a warren of our lord the King, and pertains to his Castle of Corfe.

That no merchant buying a fish within the warren ought to take it out of the warren or carry it away, unless he shall have first placed it for sale at the *Cross of Corfe*, delaying the sale of it for an hour of the day.

And further, under "Certaine Customes of the Town of Corfe," extracted from a book at Kingston



Lacy, which formerly belonged to Sir Christopher Hatton, it appears that—

Where by the word of the Charter, viz. “nullus piscator emens pisces,” it seemeth that no ffishe takers be bounde to pitche their ffishe at the *Corfe Cross*, but buyers only, and the ffishe takers be at libertye to carry at their pleasure without lett; yet it appeareth by the Court Rolles that as well the takers as the buyers have been amerced for that default from time to time. (See Hutchins, third edition, vol. i, pp. 497-9.)

Again, according to a representation in Treswell's map of Corfe published in 1586, there was at that time a pillory and stocks in the market place, near to the entrance of the castle, and doubtless near the Cross, in which position these instruments of discipline were usually placed; so that there can be little doubt that a *Market Cross* existed in Corfe at the dates above mentioned, and that it stood in the market place in front of the old Town Hall.

The steps and base of a Cross still remained in the market square until quite recently, and on the small platform to which they led the forms and ceremonies incident to the election of Members of Parliament for the Borough formerly took place. (Hutchins, third edition, vol. i, p. 509.)

In 1897 the existing cross was erected on the base

of the old one, "to commemorate the sixtieth year of the reign of Queen Victoria," the cost being defrayed by public subscription.

The pedestal and shaft, which are of Swanage stone surmounted by a modern Latin cross, are quite new, the old base steps being reset and used as a calvary to the new cross.

The old pump "with a character," so graphically described by Mr. C. E. Robinson in his "Royal Warren or Picturesque Rambles in the Isle of Purbeck," pp. 18 and 19, was repaired and replaced, and let us hope that the suction has been set right, and gives the "Comely Damsel" who tried so hard to coax it to give out its silvery stream no further trouble.

## CORFE MULLEN

**N**EAR a venerable yew tree in the churchyard, to the west of the church, are two massive square steps, and the socket of a late fourteenth-century cross.

The socket is octagonal in its upper bed, brought to a square at its base by bold convex broaches at the angles.

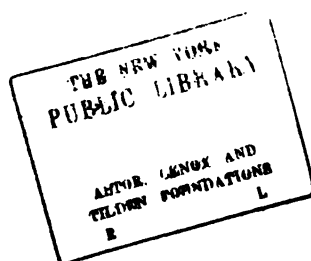
A mortise nine and a half inches by six inches (north and south), is sunk in the top for the insertion of a shaft. The socket measures one foot three inches in height by one foot two inches square at the base; the second step measures three feet nine inches square by twelve inches deep, and is, like the socket, of a hard white limestone, probably Portland or Purbeck.

The basement step is of plain construction, without any drip or moulding, of a yellow sandstone of the Ham Hill character, and may be older than the second step and socket; it is five feet six inches square and

CHURCHYARD CROSS  
CORFE MULLEN







one foot deep, and appears to be considerably sunk in the ground. The whole is in a fair state of preservation.

The following extract from the will of Thomas Phillipps, dated the 10th Oct., 1662, in the Charities of Dorset, 1839, should be interesting.

The testator, after reciting that he had delivered into the hands of John Ryves £500, directed by his will that that sum, and the interest thereof, should be disposed of as thereafter mentioned, viz. as to £10 of the interest thereof to the Curate of Corfe Mullen for the time being, *provided* that unless the Vicar of Sturminster Marshall should make a sufficient allowance to such Curate yearly, over and above what was thereby given, the said £10 should not be paid, it not being his intention that by reason of such gift the Vicar should lessen the salary of such Curate, and as to £10 more of such interest, he gave the same to the use of 10 poor children of the parish of Corfe Mullen, to be paid to them as follows: viz. 17s. 4d. to each child yearly, to buy bread and cheese on every Sunday in the year, 2d. in bread and 2d. in cheese to each at the "Great Stone" called "*the Cross*,"<sup>1</sup> in the Churchyard of Corfe Mullen, after the morning service and sermon, and 13s. 4d. to be paid to the person appointed to buy and distribute the same, and as to 13s. 4d. residue of the said £10, that it should be laid out in

<sup>1</sup> This would indicate that the shaft and cross had been removed previous to the date of Thomas Phillipps's will, probably in 1643, under the Ordinance of Parliament on that behalf.



beef at Christmas, yearly, to be distributed to the said poor children, *at the place aforesaid*, and as to £10 residue of such interest towards clothing, apparelling, and binding apprentices, such poor children of the said parish as the churchwardens, etc., should think fit.

The late Vicar of the parish, the Rev. R. W. Plumptre, informed the writer that this Charity has been continued to be administered during his incumbency.

## FIFEHEAD MAGDALEN

**A**BOUT five yards to the south of the church porch is the socket of what was probably once the village cross, and, judging from its dimensions, the cross itself must have been one of considerable size and importance.

It is of the usual fifteenth-century type, cut from one huge block of Ham Hill stone. It is twenty-one inches deep and thirty-two inches square at the base. Its upper bed is octagonal, measuring thirteen inches on each face of its octagon, and it is buttressed by deeply cut square angle shafts, bevelled at the tops.

The stone was discovered by Mr. Doran Webb, architect of Salisbury, when surveying the church with a view to its restoration. It was found buried in the soil face downwards, but has since been set the right way up, and a flat stone cemented over the mortise to prevent the water settling in it.

This socket-stone, which is in a good state of pre-

servation, is the only relic of the original cross yet discovered.

In the church are two ancient stone "Credence tables," which are said to be the only ones now remaining in the county. Those in Shillingstone Church having been removed at its restoration, in 1903. (See *post*, page 108.)

## FONTMELL MAGNA

**T**HIS village possessed, within living memory, its cross.

It stood in the centre of the village, and is said by the few old people who remember it, to have consisted of a "broken pillar" standing on four steps, which were about three yards square at the base.

Near it stood the village stocks and the maypole.

Some forty years ago what was left of this once venerable cross had become so dilapidated that the parish authorities decided on its removal as "doing no credit to so respectable a village," and it was taken down accordingly.

Some of the stones may still be seen in neighbouring gardens.

In the Domesday Book the Church of St. Mary of Sceptesberie held Fontmale. In King Edward I's time it was held by the Abbess of Shaftesbury. At the Dissolution the manor was granted to the Arundels afterwards barons of Wardour.

## GUSSAGE ALL SAINTS

**T**HERE was formerly an ancient cross in this village. It stood at the cross roads just outside the churchyard.

The Rev. A. S. B. Freer, Vicar, informs the writer that the site is still known as "The Cross," and is never called by any other name by the villagers.

The cross has long since disappeared.

The manor, under its ancient denomination of Gussage Regis, formerly belonged to the Crown. King Henry III granted it to Imbertus Pogeys, who in his turn granted it to the Abbey of Tarent. and it was held by the Abbess at the time of the Dissolution, when it was demised to John, Lord Russel (*sic*).

The Priory of St. Julian at Southampton also held lands in this parish in 1293.

## GUSSAGE ST. MICHAEL

**T**HE remains of a fifteenth-century village cross of the ordinary type. It is situate at what is known as "The Cross," near the church and the principal approaches to the village from Crichel on the one side, and Gussage All Saints, St. Giles, and Wimborne Minster on the other.

Where it now stands was doubtless formerly the centre of the village green, the south-east side of which has been enclosed, and now forms part of the adjoining meadow. What remains of this ancient cross will now be found close to the bank of the southern boundary hedge at "The Cross."

It consists of the base or socket-stone of a fifteenth-century cross, twenty-six inches square by fourteen inches deep, of Melbury or Tisbury stone, and where not worn away shows bold chamfering at its upper edge.

Firmly leaded into the socket, and set square with

the base, is the stump of a shaft, seven inches square by eleven high.

The remains are much worn, being used, as the Rector informs me, as an "upping-stone."

In the church, at the east end of the north aisle, set up over the Old Chapel arch is a small fourteenth-century cross which was discovered in excavating for the new vestry, built in 1895.

The cross is of plain construction, and was found in a vault, laid on the top of an old stone coffin-slab, and placed in its present position by the Rector, the Rev. H. I. Wright.

## HAMMON

### *Alias* HAM-MOHUN

**H**AMMON at one time possessed a very fine fourteenth-century village cross, the remains of which stood on the green in the centre of the village until the year 1869-70, when the village was largely rebuilt. The remains were then removed from their original site, and the only portions which appear to have been preserved were the socket-stone, and a portion of the shaft. The former, which is some thirty inches square and fifteen inches deep, may now be seen face down, in an out-of-the-way place, under some chestnut trees at the back of the church.

Hard by is a public spring, and what remains of the once handsome shaft, consisting of a piece of Ham Hill stone, three feet six inches long by ten inches square, with a bold roll moulding at the angles is used as a "dipping-stone," and forms one side of the well or basin of the public spring.



It was only through the courtesy of the venerable Rector, the Rev. H. D. Sawyer, that the writer was enabled to discover the whereabouts of these interesting relics. They appear to have been entirely lost sight of, being covered up with nettles and rubbish.

## IWERNE COURTNEY

### *Alias* SHROTON

**A**T the cross roads in the village street known as "Shroton Cross" is the base-stone or socket of what was formerly the Village Cross. It is of Ham Hill stone, very massive, but much worn, with indications of convex broaches at the angles.

There is a mortise in which, within the memory of the older inhabitants, the stump of a shaft was fixed. This is said to have been removed about fifty years ago, no trace of it now remains.

## LANGTON HERRING

**A**T the junction of the road from Weymouth to Portesham with that from Langton, about a quarter of a mile from the village, are the remains of a fine old Latin cross hewn out of a solid block of Portland or Ridgway stone, firmly embedded in the ground to the extent of one foot seven inches (as ascertained by the late Major Sparks), but without socket or steps. Judging from the bold chamfered edges both of the shaft and the arms, and the design of the work, it would probably be considered early fourteenth century.

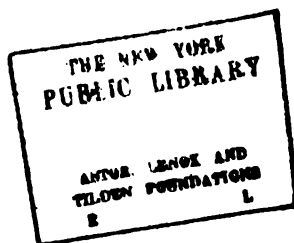
The top or head of the cross has been broken off, and the arms, particularly the right, have been somewhat damaged, and the whole is much weather-worn and covered with moss and lichen which adds much to its venerable appearance.

There is no lettering or ornament of any kind upon the stone.

LANGTON HERRING CROSS







The following are the measurements.

Length of shaft from ground to where broken off, three feet two inches.

Transom, or arms, twenty inches.

Width of shaft at base, eleven and a half inches, tapering to nine and a half inches at the top. The chamfering of the angles, which is unusually bold, measures two and three-quarter inches in width.

The cross faces south, inclining slightly towards the west, and before the deeply excavated road to Portesham was made would have stood out much more prominently than at present.

It stands in the direct route and about half way between Weymouth and the ancient Abbey of Abbotsbury and St. Catherine's Chapel in that parish, and may have been a guide mark or praying station for those pilgrims landing at Weymouth and journeying to the monastery or to the chapel, or it may have served as a boundary mark of the abbey lands for which there was no further use when the monastery was dissolved and deprived of its possessions.

The plate is from a photograph by Mr. Clive Holland.



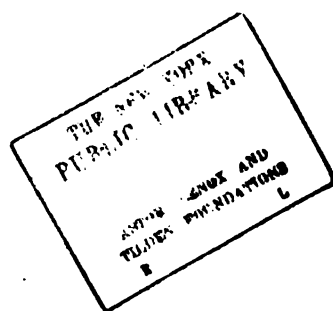
## LEIGH IN YETMINSTER

**A**T the junction of the roads leading to Yetminster and Chetnole, opposite the School House, set up on tiers of rough modern masonry, is the socket of a fourteenth-century cross, in which there still remains about two inches of the base of the ancient shaft (fifteen inches square) which appears to have been sawn off level at that distance above the socket. This is set diagonally with the square base of the socket, into which it is run with lead. The socket, which is octagonal in its upper bed, with bold moulded edges, is brought to a square at the base by high convex broaches which are much worn away by children climbing over them. The stone is a solid block of Ham Hill, thirty-three inches square at the base, and twenty-three inches deep. There are no steps or calvary. To the stump of the ancient shaft is fixed a tapering monolith, very curiously carved, of a hard coarse-grained stone, possibly from Hamdon

**VILLAGE CROSS  
LEIGH IN YETMINSTER**







Hill but of a texture very different from that of the socket, five feet high and probably thirteenth-century work. Upon this again is fixed a Latin cross of modern date, with a solid square base some inches thick. This curious erection would appear to be composed of stones of three distinct periods: (1) the base or socket fourteenth century; (2) the shaft, thirteenth century; and (3) the Latin cross, which is comparatively of modern date, and is said to have been placed in its present position when the cross was re-erected, as it now stands, by the Rev. — Smith, who was curate in charge under the Rev. — Hope, the first Vicar of Leigh after its separation from Yetminster in the year 1847. The Rev. C. W. H. Dicker, Vicar of Piddletrenthide, has recently made a very careful drawing of this monument, which is now in the possession of the Rev. T. L. Jenkins, Vicar, and was reproduced in the "Leigh Magazine" of April, 1905, together with the following description of the shaft, which, as I am not in a position to question, I quote *in extenso*.

This shaft is unique as far as my experience goes. It is richly carved on three sides, with canopy work at the top, presumably of the fourteenth century. The sculptures, now considerably defaced, appear to have contained representations of (on the south side) St. Christopher carrying the Christ,

and (on the east side) St. Michael slaying the Dragon. I could make nothing of the north side. The general appearance of this piece of stone, and the fact that one side of it (the west side) is left entirely without ornament, but shows marks of having been attached to some building by iron stays, suggests that it was not originally intended for its present use. It may very likely have been a part of a pinnacle surmounting a buttress or flanking a tower.

IN THE CHURCHYARD, to the south-east of the church, is the much dilapidated base of a fourteenth-century cross of Ham Hill stone, with indications of bold convex broaches at the corners. It is thirty-three inches square by sixteen inches deep, and in it is set, diagonally thereto, the square base of a shaft broken off almost level with the socket. It probably formed part of a preaching cross.

Hutchins says: "In Domesday Book the Bishop of Salisbury holds Estminstre (Yetminster)." In Henry VIII's time several farms and lands in the parish of Yetminster belonged to Cerne Abbey.

The plate is from a photograph by Miss Hilda Pope.

## LYTCHET MINSTER

**T**HAT this village formerly possessed its preaching cross, which stood somewhere near the church, and was probably of a date anterior thereto, there can be little doubt.

The Vicar, the Rev. W. Farley, informs me that a few years since, when an old wall of the churchyard was pulled down, the base or socket-stone, similar to those in the churchyards of the adjoining parishes of Corfe Mullen and Sturminster Marshall, was discovered.

It may now be seen in the churchyard at the west end of the church, near the church tower. It is of the ordinary churchyard or village type, with bold convex broaches at the angles, an unusually large mortise, into which a handsome octagonal shaft, squared at the base, must have fitted. There are indications of great force having been used in detaching this socket-stone from its original base. Late fourteenth century.

In Edward III's time portions of this manor were held of the Prior of Christ-Church, Twynham.



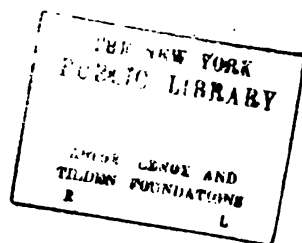
## MAIDEN NEWTON

**T**HE village or market cross stood in the middle of the village. It is said to have been one of the finest in the county, with a calvary formed of several tiers of steps, and a grand shaft, finely carved, niched and canopied on the western side. The calvary is said to have been removed when the new coaching road to the west was made by the Turnpike Trust, about the year 1780, as being an obstruction, the socket only, with the remains of the shaft, being re-erected somewhat in the same position, viz., at the cross roads in the centre of the village. There is a tradition existing that the stones of the base, which must have been a goodly pile, were used by the trustees of the Dorchester and Maiden Newton Turnpike in the construction of the two bridges to the west of the village, but I can find no confirmation of this report, and on examining the bridges it will be

VILLAGE CROSS  
MAIDEN NEWTON







found that the copings only of the parapets are of Ham Hill stone, of which stone the base of the cross was doubtless built.

The remains of the old cross now consist of a socket of Ham Hill stone three feet three inches square by fifteen inches deep (out of ground) in a much worn and dilapidated condition, showing little or no sign of the usual broaches, chamfers or mouldings. Into the mortise of this socket is fixed with cement, the usual leading not being discernible, the stump of a massive square shaft of a hard close-grained stone, of Ham Hill character, much harder than that from which the socket is formed, measuring four feet in height, nineteen inches square at the base, and fourteen inches square at the top, into the top of which is leaded an iron spike, or dowel, about a foot in length, presumably for securing the upper portion of the shaft. The shaft has deep cut rolls at the angles, and the west face is ornamented with a sculptured figure, standing on a corbel, both of which are now so much defaced that it would be difficult to conjecture what might have been originally represented.

The remaining sides are plain, without carving.

No mention is made of this cross in either edition of Hutchins, but the following extract from John Banger Russell's notes on "The Cross at Maiden

Newton," written about the year 1780, may be interesting:

In the middle of this parish there was lately a cross. The pyramid was remarkable, being lofty, and adorned with much carved work, that (*sic*) somewhat defaced. The ascent to it was by several rows of steps, and to do it justice one might say that it was the finest in the county, Stalbridge Cross only excepted. This venerable piece of antiquity has been lately removed by some disorderly and ignorant people, and it has been alleged for an excuse for this shameful action that it would have been an obstruction to the turnpike road. It were to be wished that it had been erected again in a place where no one could be offended with it.

### THE CHURCHYARD CROSS

In the churchyard, some ten feet to the south of the south transept, is the stump of the octagonal shaft of an old cross, set in a massive square socket, both being of Ham Hill stone. The shaft is three feet three inches high, and brought to a square at the base by convex stops, at the angles it is quite plain and equal sided, and tapers sharply towards the top. The socket, which is very massive, has an octagonal chamfered upper bed, with broaches of bold convex outline; it is three feet square at the base, and one foot eight inches deep, and is set up on a chamfered

plinth of Portland stone. It may be questioned if this stump, which is cemented into the socket, and set square with the base, is part of the original shaft of the cross. The original shaft of so solid a base, which may have been mounted on a calvary of several steps, would probably have been more massive and set diagonally with the base and leaded into its mortise.

The only record the writer has been able to find of this cross is in the third edition of Hutchins, vol. ii, published in 1863, where it is described as "The base and part of the shaft of a small perpendicular cross."

It is said to have been placed in its present position in comparatively recent years by a former Rector of the parish.

One third of the manor of Maiden Newton was in the reign of Edward IV granted to the Abbey of Cerne, and appears to have remained in its possession until the Dissolution of the monasteries, which may account for the erection of these two beautiful crosses, both of which are probably early fifteenth-century work.

The plate of the village cross is from a photograph by Mr. W. L. Stephens.



## MELBURY BUBB, OR BUBB DOWN

**I**N the churchyard to the south of the tower is the socket and part of the shaft of a fifteenth-century cross.

The socket, which is square at the base, has fallen into decay; the upper bed was octagonal, as evidenced by the remains of the broaches at the corners, now almost entirely disappeared. It measures thirty inches square at the base by fifteen inches deep.

What remains of the shaft, which was set square with the socket, is thirteen inches high and twelve inches square at the base, and is brought to an octagon nine inches from the base by mitred stops. It is loosely fitted in the mortise, there being no evidence of leading.

The whole is of Ham Hill stone.

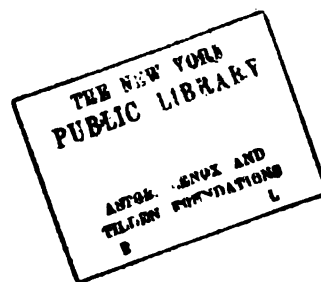
The plate is from a photograph by Miss Hilda Pope.

NOT far distant, also to the south of the tower, is a Modern Cross, erected to the memory of John

**CHURCHYARD CROSS**  
**MELBURY BUBB**







Christopher in 1898. It is of Portland stone and said to be "a true reproduction" of the Old Cross described above. I must leave the reader, after inspection, to judge how far this has been successful.

## MELBURY OSMOND

**I**N the south-west corner of the churchyard, by the entrance gate near the rectory, is a part of the octagonal base of an Old Cross, probably early fourteenth century.

It is of Ham Hill stone and measures thirty-eight inches in diameter and fifteen inches on each face of the octagon.

The rector, the Rev. R. Bradley Roe, informs the writer that when the church was being restored in 1887, an old Norman font was discovered, embedded in the masonry of the steps leading to the gallery, in perfect condition, but with no base, and that a part of the base of the old cross was used to complete it.

The font, *much restored*, may be seen in the church.

## MILTON ABBAS

**T**HE old town of Milton was probably one of the most ancient in the county ; it grew up with the Abbey which was founded by King Athelstan in the year 938. To it the King granted charters for an annual fair on St. Sampson's day, 28th July, and a weekly market, and later it possessed its Market Cross.

When the old town was pulled down by Joseph, Lord Milton (afterwards Earl of Dorchester), in the year 1786, and rebuilt on its present site, the fair and markets were discontinued and the Market Cross was demolished. All that now remains of this cross being the very massive octagonal socket-stone which marks the site in the park where the handsome fifteenth-century cross is said to have stood.

The Rev. Herbert Pentin, Vicar of the parish, in a paper read at a meeting of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club, the 14th



December, 1903, and contained in vol. xxv p. 1 of their Proceedings, gives the following description of this venerable cross.

In the centre of the widest portion of the Market Street, the busiest street in the town, was the magnificent market cross. It was one of the finest in the kingdom, quite worthy of its position near the Abbey Church.

It had an ascent of no less than thirty steps. Its site is marked in the present park by a stone which is said to be a portion of the original cross. Our registers tell us that during the days of the Commonwealth banns of marriage were published "in the market." The weekly market was well attended and was held round the market cross.

It is curious that no vestige of this cross, except the socket above referred to, remains; careful inquiry has failed to discover any. Possibly the stones may have been used in the buildings of the new town in 1786; if so, they may some day come to light.

Mr. Pentin also refers to an ancient cross in the Abbey churchyard called the "Druid's Cross." Its exact position was, he says, twelve feet from the south-east angle of the south transept of the Abbey Church and that it perished with the churchyard.

John Banger Russell, of Beaminster, in his manuscript notes on Milton Abbas, written about the year 1780, says:

In the churchyard belonging to this parish there is a cross consisting of three flights of steps. Exactly square on the top is a large stone with a hole in the middle in which perhaps there was a pyramid. I, myself, remember when there remained a little piece of iron fastened to the middle, so that I cannot think it was used for a bason for Holy Water to sprinkle those that prayed there.

There appears, therefore, at one time to have been three Crosses at Milton, viz. : (1) the Market cross, (2) the Druid's cross, and (3) the Churchyard cross, probably a preaching cross, all now destroyed.

The manor of Milton, in Domesday Book, belonged to the Abbey.—“The church itself holds Mideltone, and it is the head of the Abbey.”—And so it continued until the Dissolution, when it was granted by King Henry VIII to John Tregonwell.

Two at least of these beautiful crosses, viz., the Market cross and the Preaching cross, were doubtless, as in many other instances, erected by the monks. The cross known as the “Druid's cross” was probably a memorial cross erected by some private individual.

## LITTLE MINTERNE

**I**S a small hamlet in the parish of Buckland Newton, situate in a valley off the main road between Cerne Abbas and Sherborne, between the ninth milestone from Dorchester and the newly-erected mansion of Lord Digby, known as Minterne House.

The remains of a wayside cross will be found under an ancient spreading beech tree at the junction of the roads known as "The Cross," one leading from the Dorchester main road to Buckland Newton and the other from the village to the higher Sherborne road, which it joins at "Giant's Head." They consist of a socket-stone and shaft only, of Ham Hill stone, without a calvary.

The socket is octagonal in its upper bed and converted into a square below by bold convex broaches, much worn away by many generations of children climbing over them. It measures three feet square on

the ground line by twenty-one inches in depth. The octagonal upper bed being fifteen inches on each face. The shaft is square and slightly tapering, set square with the socket and run with lead. It is broken off thirty-one inches from the bottom and measures fifteen inches square at the base, eighteen inches from which, at each corner, is a stop from which springs a roll bead. On the west side are indications of carving, probably the legs and feet of a sculptured figure. In the upper bed of the socket-stone on the north side is a cup-shaped cavity said to have been used as a receptacle for alms from pilgrims travelling from Sherborne and Shaftesbury to Cerne Abbey, and *vice versa*.

There was danger, some ten years since, of these venerable stones falling into decay. They were then repaired at the expense of Lord Digby.

The work is early fourteenth century.

It is doubtful if these stones are in their original position. The original cross, with its calvary, may possibly have stood on the triangular piece of ground, on which some fine beech trees now grow, formed by the main road and the two ways leading into the Buckland road, in which position it must have been passed by all the pilgrims travelling between Cerne Abbas, Sherborne and Shaftesbury.

## MOTCOMBE

**I**N the churchyard, immediately opposite the south porch, stand the remains of the old churchyard preaching cross.

There are two tiers of square steps, of great solidity, formed of blocks of Ham Hill stone, without drip or set-off, the basement step being eight feet square and fourteen inches deep, the second step five feet square and nine inches deep. On these stand the socket, also of Ham Hill stone, two feet square by sixteen inches deep, with a boldly chamfered upper bed. The shaft, of which some two feet three inches only remain, was formerly octagonal, brought to a square at the base by stops and mortised into the socket, with which it is set square, with lead, but is now much worn and defaced.

The whole structure is plain in outline, and of the ordinary type erected late in the fourteenth century.

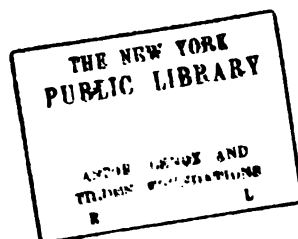
Motcombe is a Chapelry in the Liberty of Gillingham, and appears to have been given, with other

**CHURCHYARD CROSS  
MOTCOMBE**









lands, by Alured de Lincoln, in 1293, to Montacute Priory. In Edward VI's reign lands at Gillingham and Motcombe belonging to Berkeley's Chantry, co. Wilts, were granted to John Thynne (Hutchins, vol. iii, p. 618).

The plate is from a photograph by Upfield, Shaftesbury.

## OKEFORD

### *Alias* OCKFORD FITZPAINE

**I**N the centre of the village, near the church and rectory, on what was once the village green, stands the base of the ancient village cross.

In plan it is a rectangular oblong and consists of two steps and a very massive socket-stone. The basement step measures nine feet on its eastern and western sides, and eight feet on the north and south. It is of a local green sandstone known as Tisbury, has a bold set-off at the base, fourteen inches deep, and is without any weather drip. The second step, which is much worn, is formed of solid blocks of Ham Hill stone, and measures six feet on its eastern face and five feet four inches on its southern; it is nine inches deep and twelve inches wide.

The socket, which is formed from one solid block of Ham Hill stone deeply bevelled round the edge, is extremely massive measuring three feet four inches

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VILLAGE CROSS  
OKEFORD FITZPAINE

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from north to south, three feet from east to west and one foot nine inches in depth. It is octagonal in its upper bed and measures sixteen inches on the eastern and western, and fourteen inches on each of its other octagonal faces. It is brought to a square at the base by deep convex broaches at its four angles. There is a drill hole on the eastern side wherein was probably inserted an iron support for sculpture.

The shaft, which was leaded into the mortise and set square with the base, has been sawn off level with the upper face of the socket-stone, and measures sixteen inches by fifteen inches.

The work is a good example of the Decorated period, probably early fourteenth century.

The village green appears to have been taken possession of by the parish authorities early in the last century; a prison with three cells being built on the western side, and later, in 1837, a poor-house was built on the north and the whole, including the old cross, was inclosed with an iron railing. The poor-house is now used as a residence for the village school-master and what is left of the village green forms his garden.

This ancient village cross, though much dilapidated, is a venerable and interesting object, being covered with moss and lichen, with ferns, violets, primroses,



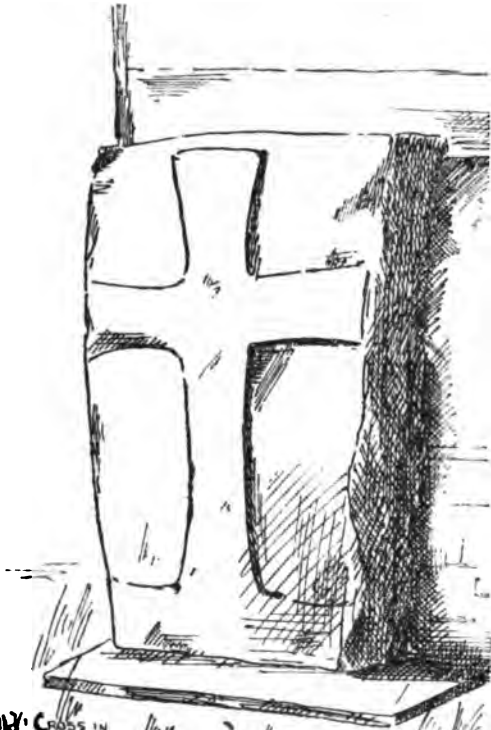
and other wild flowers growing in the interstices of the stonework.

In Domesday Book "the Church of St. Mary of Glastingberie" held Ockford Fitzpaine, and up to the reign of Henry VIII the manor was held by the Abbots of Glastonbury, who provided for the services at the cross. The Abbot of Cerne also held lands within the manor.

The plate is from a photograph by Nesbitt, Blandford.

## WEST PARLEY

**T**HERE is a cross in relief carved on a rectangular stone leaning against the outside west



Old Cross in  
West Parley  
Churchyard

wall of the church porch. It stands three feet eight inches high, two feet two inches broad across the arms, and the stone upon which it is carved is six inches in thickness. A good etching (here reproduced) of this stone by Miss Winifred Chudleigh, daughter of the Rector, the Rev. R. A. Chudleigh, has been sent me and the Rector writes that there is little known about it, and he has been unable to find any record concerning it.

A tradition exists that a cross formerly stood close

by a roadside pool near the village, called "Cross Pond," where a stone in the hedge used to mark the limit of a plot of ground called "Church Land," said to have been an ancient churchyard, but no trace of this cross can now be found.

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

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VILLAGE CROSS  
PIMPERNE

## PIMPERNE

**P**LACED in the open space near the church, formerly the village green, under the shadow of a fine old elm, hollow from age, are the remains of the Pimperne village cross.

They consist of a basement, boldly benched, two plain steps and a noble socket-stone in which is leaved the stump of a shaft, which at one time carried the cross.

The basement, which is in a fair state of preservation, measures nine feet on each face by one foot nine inches deep, the second and third steps, which are plain, measure each ten inches deep. The socket, into which the remains of the shaft are fixed, is exceedingly massive being three feet square on the upper bed, showing evidence of having been boldly chamfered round the edge, and twenty-eight inches deep. About two feet only of the shaft is left, and this is twelve and a half inches square at the base. The shaft was probably octagonal, brought to a square at the base by stops or broaches.

The whole is much worn and dilapidated, the original workings being scarcely discernible. It is of a green sandstone, probably Tisbury.

The joints were some few years since pointed with cement to keep the work intact.

There is an oak post, said to be the remains of the village stocks, close to the south side of the basement step, which is much worn away opposite to where the feet of the unruly villagers were locked in.

The Priory of Bremore, co. Hants, formerly held a manor in this parish; and the Abbess of Tarent also held lands here.

A family named "de Pympre" were early benefactors to this nunnery, and it is probable that the cross, which is late fourteenth or early fifteenth-century work, was erected by one of its members.

The plate is from a photograph by Nesbitt, Blandford.

## POORSTOCK *alias* POWERSTOCK

**F**ORMERLY had its village cross. The following is an extract from the manuscript notes of Mr. John Banger Russell of Beaminster, dated 1780.

In the middle of this Parish are the remains of a large cross, which has been much injured by time. The shaft, which seems to have been of considerable height, has been taken down, tho' the base or Pediment still continues in its proper place. The ascent was by four steps but the whole is very ruinous.

Hutchins (third edition, 1863), also writes :

A mutilated cross which stood in the centre of the village at the beginning of the present century, has since been destroyed.

The Abbot of Cerne formerly possessed lands in this parish.

## PUNCKNOWLE WITH SWYRE.

**A** FINE example of an early fifteenth-century cross stands in the churchyard some twelve feet to the north-east of the chancel. It is one of the few crosses in Dorset which escaped the fury of the Puritans and retains its shaft in its original shape, unbroken. It consists of a basement, seven feet square, almost buried in the ground, a plain solid step, five feet square and fifteen inches deep, both of a local limestone, or Ridgway, or Portland, a square socket of the usual fifteenth-century type, converted into an octagon in its upper bed by deeply cut convex broaches.

The socket is thirty-four inches square at the base, fifteen inches on each face of the octagon, and eighteen inches in depth, it is of Ham Hill stone. A very perfect plain octagonal shaft eight feet six inches high, a monolith cut from a solid block of hard coarse-grained stone resembling Ham Hill—brought to a square at the base by mitre-stops—is mortised into

**CHURCHYARD CROSS**  
**PUNCKNOWLE**







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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS**  
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the socket (with which it is set square) with lead. It girths four feet at the base, tapering to two feet nine inches at the top, and is surmounted by a very handsome abacus, with bold horizontal mouldings. This at one time doubtless carried a canopied head, as indicated by the wrought iron spike fixed into the top, by which it was supported. The shaft inclines slightly towards the north, doubtless attributable to a settlement in the base, and is much weather worn and covered with lichen. On the east octagonal face of the shaft are dowel holes and the remains of iron dowels, indications that a figure of some kind was formerly thereto attached.

It is possible that there might have been a third step which now lies buried beneath the accumulated soil which would have given the base a much better proportion to the shaft than it bears at present.

I have been unable to gather any tradition respecting this very interesting relic either locally or from the county histories. The Rev. W. Barnes, the Dorset poet, in an article on Puncknowle, contributed to "The Gentleman's Magazine" in 1835, shortly refers to it and sends a drawing showing the shaft in much the same state as it is seen at present.

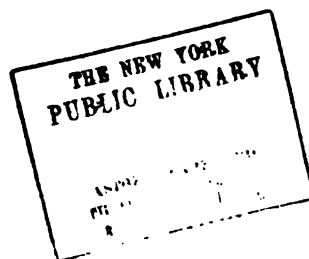
The remains of the village stocks still exist.

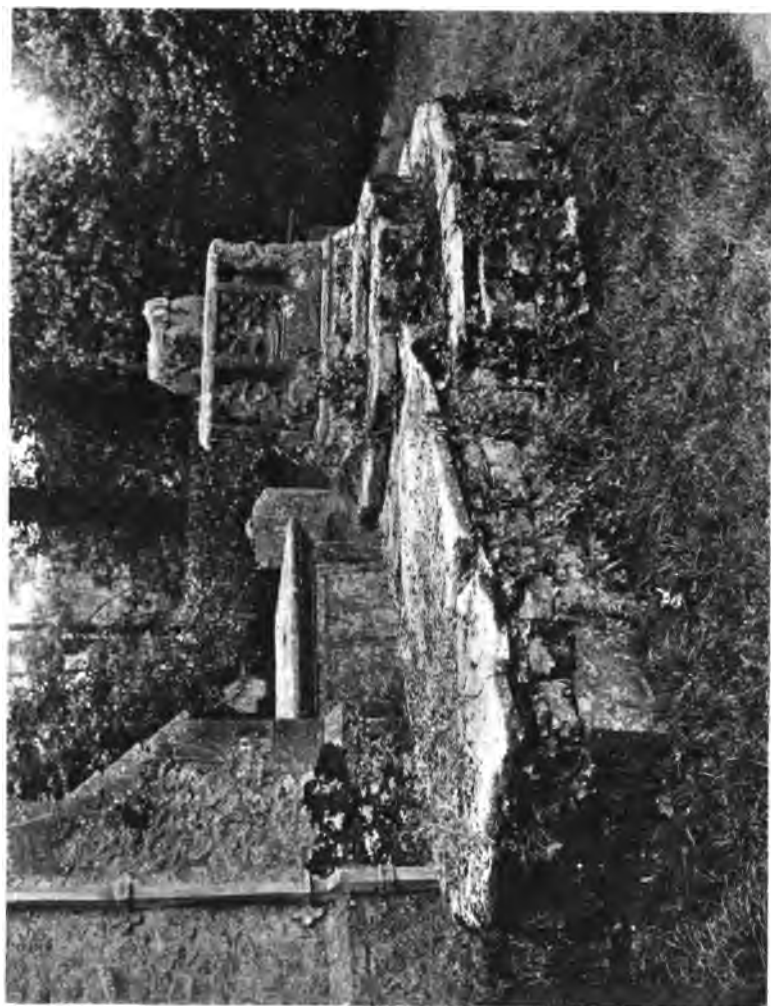
Near the church is the manor house, with a fine

Perpendicular doorway and east front, the property of G. Morton Mansel, Esq.

On the confines of this parish, at the cross roads converging from Abbotsbury, Bridport, and Swyre, are the fragments of a village cross much dilapidated. Little is known about them.

The plate is from a photograph by Mr. W. L. Stephens.







CHURCHYARD CROSS  
RAMPISHAM

## RAMPISHAM

**I**N the north-west corner of the churchyard, some six feet distant from the modern northern aisle of the church, stand the remains of a fine Perpendicular cross of a type which was mostly erected in the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth centuries, much resembling those at Bradford Abbas and Stalbridge.

It is of Ham Hill stone and consists of an octagonal base of two steps, a massive socket, and about ten inches of the once elegant shaft, which was fourteen inches square at the base, mortised with lead into the socket and set diagonally therewith.

On the east side, attached to the basement step, is a dole-table, or altar-tomb, the top slab of which is formed of one solid block of Ham Hill stone, eight feet six inches long, three feet six inches wide, and some five inches in thickness, which forms a platform, and upon which the date 1606 is cut, which



shows that it was erected subsequently to the cross which bears the date 1516.

The basement step measures thirty-two inches on each octagonal face, is sixteen inches deep to the plinth, and sixteen inches wide, it has a good weather drip, and a bold set-off ten inches deep.

The second step is twenty-four inches on each face of its octagon, ten inches wide, and nine inches deep, with no drip or set-off.

The handsome and richly carved socket, which is square and set diagonally with the base, has a deep bold moulded plinth, upon which, in Hutchins's time, an inscription, now somewhat obliterated, was clearly discernible. It commenced on the east side, each word being separated from the next by a stop ornament, in the style of the inscriptions found on bells of the same period.

Hutchins gives it in full as follows :

**\* Fili \* Dei \* miserere \* mei \* et \* sic \***

**dicit \* Porter \* in \* nomine \* Ihu \* Amen \***

**Obiit A.D. M.DXVI.**

The date (1516) occurs again at the foot of the shaft.

The four elaborately sculptured panels containing

subjects from ecclesiastical history, are fully described in Hutchins's third edition ; which description is here quoted in full.

That on the north side appears to be a representation of the martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury, as conjectured in the former edition of this work. There is a kneeling figure of an ecclesiastic, and two men in armour with raised swords, whilst an attendant standing by is stretching out his arm as if to ward off the fatal blow. It may be mentioned in support of this conjecture that the Church of Compton Valence, a neighbouring parish, is dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, showing either that he had some connection with this part of the country or that there was a strong feeling of reverence towards him here. The opposite face of the cross, which Hutchins (first edition) gives as the stoning of St. Stephen, a conjecture clearly incorrect, appears to represent King Henry the Second doing penance. There is a kneeling figure with a crown at his feet, and two others with uplifted arms, having scourges in their hands, one being a fool with cap and bells. The sculpture on the north-east panel seems to depict the laying out of the body of the martyr.

A body lies stretched at length at the foot of the subject, and two figures near it are evidently engaged in tying a band across the legs and arms respectively.

The awkward position in which these figures are placed seems to be necessitated by the desire to show three other persons from behind looking on. The sculpture on the remaining face on which two crowned figures (male and female) are represented, not as sitting at a table as represented in

to have at one time belonged to a family of that name.

## THE VILLAGE CROSS

In another part of the churchyard, and in the "middle of the Vill," in Hutchins's time, were the remains of two smaller crosses.

That in the churchyard has entirely disappeared, whilst that in the village, which at that time stood on the Green, now overshadowed by fine poplar trees, near the cross roads at the foot of the hill, opposite the "Tiger's Head Inn," was, during the incumbency of the Rev. William Pace (1794-1845) removed to its present position, opposite the "Old Rectory" House at Broomhill.

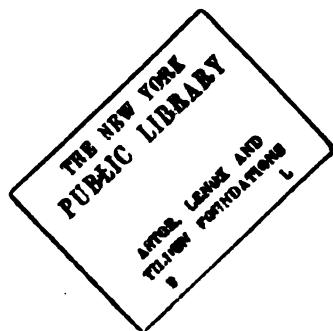
There is an interesting local tradition extant that the Rector or his Curate, being unable to sleep, ordered the cross to be removed to its present position, to the west of the old rectory, so that he might be under the shadow of the Holy Cross, or what remained of it.

This most picturesque Old Rectory House, with its thatched roof and dormer windows, has since been converted into three cottages. One of these is approached by a bold flight of semicircular steps, and within may

**VILLAGE CROSS  
RAMPISHAM**







still be seen the fine early Jacobean oak staircase which led to the upper rooms.

What remains of this once handsome village cross consists of a much dilapidated, deeply broached socket worked in Ham Hill stone, measuring three feet square at the base and fifteen inches deep. There are indications of a sunk panel relieved by sculpture, a rose or quatrefoil, on the south face of the socket-stone, and probably something of the same kind existed on its other faces.

Into the socket is mortised with lead the remains of a square tapering shaft set square therewith, four feet six inches in height, fifteen inches square at the base, and twelve inches square at the top.

There is a bold roll at the angles, and on the west side are traces of what might once have been a niched and canopied figure, standing on a bracket. The Rev. J. Pulliblack (Rector), suggests that this may have represented St. Michael, to whom the church is dedicated, standing on a dragon, worked as a corbel.

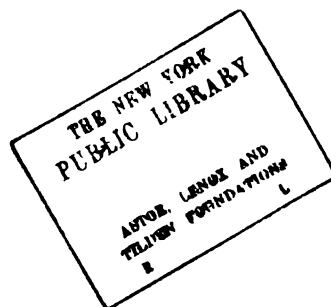
This ancient village cross, like others of similar type, doubtless originally stood on a calvary of several steps, of which those at the old rectory may have formed part,<sup>1</sup> and was probably erected early in the

<sup>1</sup> The square socket of the cross at Horsington, Somerset, is approached by four *circular* steps.



fourteenth century. There is a government bench mark on the base stone.

The plates are from photographs by Mr. Richard Hine.







**CROSS IN HOLY TRINITY CHURCHYARD  
SHAFTESBURY**

## SHAFTESBURY

**I**T is no matter for surprise that this ancient Abbey town, which was under the immediate sway of the powerful Abbess of Shaston, who, with the King, or his lessees, were joint owners of the manor, and to which pilgrims flocked from all parts, should have been rich in preaching, praying and market crosses.

Hutchins (first edition, 1773) mentions five crosses as standing in his time, and one other (the Butter Cross) which had then recently been removed. Two only of these now remain.

A short notice of each of these crosses is here given, chiefly from information gathered from Hutchins (second edition, 1803).

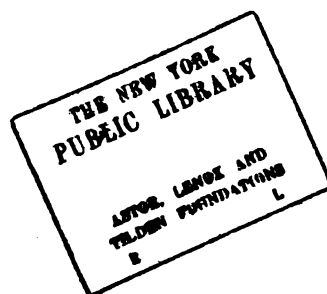
I. *St. Mary's Cross*.—Probably a preaching or praying cross. It stood on St. Mary's Green, near Mr. Grove's gate at Bimport. It was removed about the year 1798.

II. *Gold, or Gould-Hill Cross*, stood near St. Peter's

Church, where the present Guildhall, which was erected by the Marquis of Westminster in 1827, now stands. The old cross, which was probably a preaching cross, being removed to provide a site. It consisted of a basement and two steps, surmounted by a pedestal, in which was set a massive octagonal shaft, upon which was a Latin cross, and near to it was the ancient bull-ring, stocks and whipping-post. An engraving of this cross is preserved in Hutchins.

III. *The Fish Cross*, which was a market cross, and is shown in Mr. Willis's map of Shaftesbury, drawn in 1615, and reproduced in Hutchins, stood a little beyond the "New" Guildhall, to the west, near St. Peter's Church, and was covered with lead. It was removed about the year 1783.

IV. *The Butter and Cheese Cross*, anciently called the "Poultry Cross," also shown on Mr. Willis's map, stood in the Butter Market, and had a reservoir on the top for the supply of water for the town, in connection with the waterworks formerly at the foot of Castle Hill. Hutchins says this cross was taken down in 1727, but the inscription on it was preserved and removed into a back court of the house formerly belonging to Henry Saunders, and afterwards occupied by William Kimber, where (in 1868) it still remained. The inscription was as follows:









ST. JOHN'S CROSS  
SHAFTESBURY

THIS CROSS WAS BUILT BY ME

EDMOND BOWER 1562

SHAFTSURIÆ, EDMUNDUS BOWER, COGNOMINE PRÆTOR,  
HANC PROPRIIS STRUXIT SUMPTIBUS IPSE CRUCEM.  
UTILIOR POPULO, SIMUL AC ORNATIO ESSET  
UT LOCUS, EGREGII PIGNUS AMORIS ONUS.

Below are the arms and crest of Bower and the date 1562.

V. *Cross in Holy Trinity Churchyard*.—It stands near the south-west door of Holy Trinity Church, and consists of a calvary of three steps (one of which is almost buried in the ground), a pedestal or socket, in which is fixed a massive octagonal shaft, about twelve feet in height, of a hard limestone, surmounted by a modern Latin cross, on which are the letters I.N.R.I. and the inscription "ABSIT GLORIARI NISI."

The restoration was effected, the Rector, the Rev. G. H. Yarrell, informs the writer, about fifty years ago.

There is an old engraving of this cross before restoration in Hutchins, in which the three steps are shown. The photograph from which the plate for this cross was worked was taken quite recently by Upfield of Shaftesbury.

VI. *St. John's Cross*.—This was doubtless a pray-

ing cross used by some of the many pilgrims who visited the ancient monastery, said to have been founded by King Ethelbald or by his brother King Alfred the Great. It now stands in the garden of St. John's Cottage, which is on the site of St. John's Church and churchyard, mentioned in Hutchins. Mr. H. C. Forrester, who is now the owner of the cottage, informs me that the cross formerly stood in a corner of the churchyard, but that within living memory it has twice been moved.

It is a question whether this is the same St. John's Cross, the position of which is so clearly described in Hutchins's first edition (1774), vol. ii, p. 5, as follows:

Near the east end of St. Martin's Church is an open place where many ways meet, and besides the way continuing straight on from High Street to East Street (now Salisbury Street) and Hart Lane, there to the north-east branches off Corpe or Cop Street Lane, and to the south Shetewel Lane, which leads down the hill to part of St. Peter's parish, adjoining to St. James's. In the centre of these streets stood St. John's Cross, so called from the chantry of St. John within the monastery, which had a house belonging to it in East Street.

This position is a long way distant from the site of St. John's Church, and if the existing St. John's Cross

is the same as that mentioned by Hutchins it must have been removed from its original position to that in St. John's churchyard. It is strange that the fact of its removal is not noticed by Hutchins. Although later on, p. 32, he refers to the church dedicated to St. John the Baptist, which stood on the west end of St. John's Hill, as "ruinated beyond the memory of man," and to an altar-tomb near the "vestiges" of the church, to the memory of the Rev. Nicholas Clark, Rector of St. James, who died in 1724, but no mention is made of the cross.

This cross, as re-erected and restored, consists of a calvary of three square steps, some of which are modern, with a massive square socket, boldly chamfered in its upper bed, into which is fixed with lead a square tapering shaft, also boldly chamfered, surmounted by a Latin cross, the whole being about ten feet high, and of Ham Hill stone. Mr. Doran Webb puts the date as fourteenth century.

In the shaft are four panels, two on the east side, as shown in the plate, and two on the reverse side, one corresponding in situation to the lower panel in the plate, and the other in the socket-stone. Both panels shown in the plate are carved in alabaster, and are now covered with glass for their better preservation. The lower one of these represents the Deity,

the reverse panel being too far perished even to admit of conjecture as to the subject represented.

In the upper panel our Lord is represented in a "vesica piscis," supported by two angels.

The panel in the socket-stone is also nearly perished, but enough is left to show that there were once two figures carved upon it.

The plate is from a photograph by Upfield, Shaftesbury.

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VILLAGE CROSS  
SHAPWICK

## SHAPWICK

**T**HIS village formerly possessed a fine village cross. In the second edition of Hutchins (1803), is an engraving of it as it then appeared. Unfortunately it was allowed to get into decay, and what was left of it was almost completely destroyed in a drunken freak over twenty years ago. The steps have since been renovated, the grand old socket put into position, and the whole surmounted by what looks like a milestone, but intended to represent the stump of the original shaft which was destroyed.

It stands in the centre of the village, at the junction of four cross roads, not far from the church. In plan it is octagonal, with a lofty calvary of four steps, surmounted by a massive socket of Ham Hill stone one foot six inches high, boldly chamfered round its upper bed, with a plinth or set-off four and a half inches deep at the bottom.

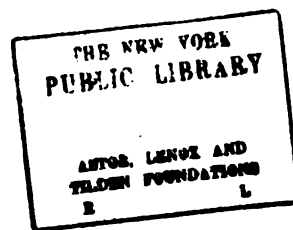
The four steps, which are of red sandstone, are

eleven inches, nine inches, eight and a half inches and seven inches deep respectively, of plain construction and no weather drips, the basement step being four feet ten inches on each face of the octagon.

The modern shaft which is made of some hard local stone, rough dressed, is thirteen inches square and three feet eight inches high and fixed diagonally in the old socket.

The restoration is said to have been carried out at the expense of the late Ralph Bankes, Esq., who was lord of the manor.

There was formerly a priory here.









THE CONDUIT  
SHERBORNE

## SHERBORNE

**T**HIS ancient cathedral town, according to Mr. W. B. Wildman, M.A.,<sup>1</sup> formerly possessed three High Crosses resembling more or less that which still stands in the village of Stalbridge. They stood one at the top and one at the bottom of Cheap Street, and one in Newland; not a vestige of any one of these now remains. When they were removed he does not say. But that one was standing so late as 1774 is certain, as Hutchins, in the first edition of his work published in that year, gives the following description of it:

In the High Street stands a neat cross resembling that at Stalbridge, but only nine feet high, the top having been broken off just above the image, and replaced with a dial. On the south face is an image of St. John, clothed in a skin of some animal, the head hanging down between his feet. He holds in his left hand a lamb. Behind his legs kneel two figures, that on the left holds a string of beads. Under

<sup>1</sup> Wildman's "History of Sherborne," p. 50.

the pedestal kneel two more figures. The cross is one foot and a half square at the base, which has no compartments, and is three feet in diameter, two feet and a half high, octagon, with squares at the four sides six inches wide. The two steps are also octagon, the first a foot, the other twenty inches high.

It is probable that the other two crosses referred to were demolished in the year 1643, when the Ordinance for the destruction of crosses went forth.

**THE CONDUIT.**—I should not be doing Sherborne justice if I omitted to mention this venerable and interesting monument. It stands in the market-place, is an octagonal building in the Perpendicular style, constructed of eight slightly pointed arches supported by massive buttressed piers, with bold plinths. They support a fine vaulted roof hidden by a parapet capped with a deep moulding, and having a bold string-course, or weather drip. The arches were filled in with Perpendicular tracery, much of which has been removed. On the east side is a fountain, which is modern. The conduit formerly stood in the centre of the school cloister court, but was, in or about the year 1560, moved to the market-place, where it now stands. Hutchins, in 1774, gives the following short description of the conduit:

In the market-place is an octagonal building, erected by Sir John Horsey in the Gothic taste, on the top of which is a short cross, and within it a conduit pipe, which yields near an hogshead of water every minute.

Mr. Wildman in his work gives a full account of the earlier history of the "Conduit House," and also adds some of the uses to which it has been put in more modern times. In 1834 its windows were glazed, a door was put in it, and it was furnished at a cost of £140 as a reading-room for the use of the town. In 1847 the reading-room scheme came to an end, and in 1861, after being used rent free as a police station, it was converted into a penny bank at a yearly rent of £1. After a year or two the rent ceased to be paid; "a circumstance," writes Mr. Wildman, "which leads one to think that the inhabitants of Sherborne, with superfluous pennies, had little faith in the burglar-proof qualities of this venerable relic of the middle ages."

The plate is from a photograph by F. Frith and Co.

## SHILLINGSTONE

**T**O the north of the village, on the green formed by the junction of the main road with the road leading to the church and rectory, stands the village cross. The base only, consisting of two steps and a socket, was all that remained of it at its restoration in 1903. The basement step is nine feet square on its upper face, finely benched, with a deep weather drip and bold set-off. The second step is plain, with no drip or set-off.

The massive socket, formed from one solid block of Ham Hill stone, is octagonal in its upper bed, brought to a square at its base by bold convex broaches, its lower bed being worked with a cant or deep set-off much worn. There are carved sunk panels on the four faces, the subjects of which are now scarcely discernible.

The square shaft, which had been sawn off level with the top of the socket, was set diagonally with the

VILLAGE CROSS  
SHILLINGSTONE

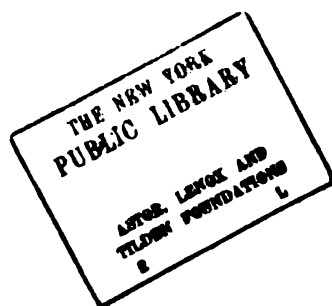
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base, and run with lead, the whole being of Ham Hill stone; the basement, previous to the restoration, stood on a level with the ground. A good engraving of the base of this cross as it appeared in Hutchins's time, with a short description, is given in the third edition of Hutchins, vol. iii, p. 432.

These remains were, in 1903, raised on a stone sub-base, the calvary was restored, and a new shaft fixed in the old socket, at the expense of the family of the late Mr. Kyrle Chapman, to his memory.

The restoration was completed from the design and under the superintendence of Mr. C. E. Ponting, F.S.A., the diocesan architect, to whom the writer is indebted for the following description of the cross as restored:

The old base stone and steps have been reset without renewal, the old shaft was let into the base and run with lead, it had been sawn off level with the top of the base. It was fixed diagonally, but in order not to destroy this bit of evidence, the new shaft is let in square with the base. The new shaft has pinnacles worked on the angles, and a carved cap. The head has four canopied niches, with sculptured subjects in each, viz., in the niche facing east, the Crucifixion; in that on the west the Annunciation; in that on the south the figure of a bishop, representing Saint Birinus; and in that on the north Saint Alahelin. These are flanked with pinnacles, and surmounted by a crocketed spire.

*In the churchyard* to the east of the porch is the base of what was probably a preaching cross. It is of Ham Hill stone, and consists of a basement seven feet square and eighteen inches deep, with a bold fluted weather drip, and a good set-off, and a second step, four feet ten inches square, and eleven inches deep, formed of three solid blocks of stone, with no weather drip. There is no socket nor shaft. Tradition says that, as at Corfe Mullen, bread and alms were distributed once a year from this cross to the poor of the parish.

On the bed of the second step rest two rectangular blocks of stone, each about twenty inches by eleven inches, which the Rev. R. G. Bartelot, who as missionary of St. Andrew's Society took charge of the parish in 1903, informs the writer were formerly affixed to the east wall of the chancel, one on each side of the altar, where from time immemorial they had served as "credence tables." At the restoration of Shillingstone Church in 1903, these bracket stones were sawn off level with the wall to make room for the magnificent "transalpine altar" specially designed for the church. Mr. Bartelot found the stones in a heap of rubbish after the masons had left, and had them placed in the position they now occupy.

It is worthy of note that the church is dedicated to the Holy Cross.

The cross was probably erected early in the fifteenth century.

The base of another cross is referred to in Hutchins, vol. iii, p. 457 (third edition), as being situate at the southern extremity of the village, on the left of the road to Blandford. Of this the writer has been unable to discover any trace, and the Rev. J. W. Cooke, the Rector, informs him that he does not know of its existence.

## SPETTISBURY

**I**N the garden in front of the neat farm-house near the church, known as "Church Farm," may be seen the socket-stone of what was formerly the Spettisbury village cross. It is in a fine state of preservation, and measures some thirty-three inches square by fifteen inches deep, it shows bold convex broaching at the angles, by which the upper bed is formed into an octagon, and doubtless at one time carried a massive octagonal shaft of the usual fifteenth-century type. It is now being used, surmounted by some fine Dorset flints, as a rock-work for flowers.

In a corner of the garden are some worked stones, which doubtless at one time also formed part of the village cross.

The accompanying plate shows to what curious uses these ancient stones are sometimes put.

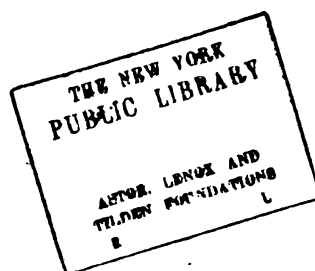
The manor of "Charlton Speytbody" was in the reign of Edward I granted to the Abbess and Convent

BASE OF CROSS  
SPETTISBURY









of Tarent, and was so held at the dissolution of the monasteries.

The plate is from a photograph by Nesbitt, Blandford.

## STALBRIDGE

**I**N the High Street of this old market town, opposite the Rectory garden, stands a very interesting and almost unique specimen of a fourteenth-century cross. It is in a fair state of preservation and seems to have escaped the Puritan fury in 1643, when so many of our beautiful crosses were demolished. It is practically in its original state, its tabernacled head, with its crocketed spire, which was formerly surmounted with a cross, only having undergone restoration.

It consists of a calvary of three octagonal steps and a massive socket, which supports a square tapering shaft with a roll at the angles, capped by an octagonal abacus, bearing four shields, and surmounted by an open stone shrine of rich tabernacle-work and a crocketed spire, the whole being of Ham Hill stone. The shaft, which is a monolith, is about twelve feet in height and eighteen inches square at the base. On

**MARKET CROSS  
STALBRIDGE**





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one side of it is a standing figure, which, according to Hutchins, was probably intended to represent our Saviour, with a lamb at His feet, supported on a square bracket or corbel, borne by an angel's head, and covered by a bold ogee canopy.

The socket is cut from one solid block of Ham Hill stone, thirty-eight inches square by twenty-eight inches deep, with angle shafts which formerly bore figures or other disengaged ornaments. The four sides of the socket are sculptured in relief in sunk panels, one of which, according to the very fine engraving of this cross by Basire, in the first edition of Hutchins, 1774, is made to represent the resurrection of our Lord, who holds a cross in His hand; the three other sides also seem to have had reference to the same event.

The basement step, which measures three feet ten inches on each octagonal face, and is fifteen inches deep, has a prominent weather drip and a bold plinth, both of which are much worn in places. The second and third steps are each seven inches deep, and are also much worn away, especially on the east side. The whole structure stands about thirty feet high. This cross is considered to be the finest in the county, and has the advantage of not having been over restored.

The date of its erection is said to be 1309, but



the open stone shrine which forms the head, and the crocketed spire point to a style somewhat later.

An interesting notice of this cross will be found in "Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries," vol. iii, p. 40; and a full description of it in Hutchins's "History of Dorset," third edition, vol. iii, p. 673.

## STINSFORD

**W**ITHIN the confines of this parish are three venerable stones worthy of notice; and, although two of them at least do not come strictly within the province of this work to describe, they should not be altogether omitted.

No. 1 is situated on an elevated position on Puddletown Heath, commanding views of great beauty and extent, which comprise the fine monument erected on Blagdon Hill to Nelson's captain, Sir Thomas Hardy on the west, and the Purbeck Hills on the south.

All that remains of this once much larger fragment, may be found by following the track-way leading from Bhompston northward to Yellowham Bottom, till a spot to the north-east of Rushy Pond is reached where the track-way intersects the old Roman road from Dorchester through Weatherbury Castle to Badbury Rings. In the immediate vicinity are three

British tumuli known as "Rain" barrows, and the remains of the beacon-keeper's hut, used in the war with Napoleon, so well depicted by Mr. Thomas Hardy in his recent work "The Dynasts." Part I, Act II, Scene V of that drama, gives a picture of the upland as it was at night in those times:

A lofty ridge of heathland, terminating in an abrupt slope, at the summit of which are three tumuli. On the sheltered side of the most prominent of these stands a hut of turves with a brick chimney. In front are two ricks of fuel, one of heather and furze for quick ignition, the other of wood for slow burning. Something in the feel of the darkness and in the personality of the spot imparts a sense of uninterrupted space around, the view by day extending from the cliffs of the Isle of Wight eastward to Blackdon Hill, by Deadman's Bay westward, and south across the valley of the Frome to the ridge that screens the Channel.

The stone, which is almost buried in the soil, is of Ham Hill, and may, at one time, have formed a portion of a late fourteenth or early fifteenth-century cross. On the west side is a rudely sculptured figure standing on a corbel in a canopied and cusped niche, with right hand uplifted to the head, and the left crossing the body. There is a deeply grooved panel on the south side. It is a rectangular oblong measuring one foot six inches by twelve inches, and was

formerly, including the part in the ground, about four feet six inches high; but some three feet of the upper portion, Mr. Hardy informs me, was broken off and carried away well within his recollection, leaving the stump only, above described, in the ground.

A good drawing of this interesting relic was made by the late Mr. Henry Moule in July, 1887, and is still in his collection.

The fragment may at one time have formed part of some cross in the neighbourhood, and was doubtless placed in its present position as a boundary stone between Lord Ilchester's property and that of Mr. Robert Hayne.

No. 2 is a large, slightly tapering monolith of a coarse hard red sandstone or species of conglomerate, measuring close on five feet out of the ground and probably two feet six inches underneath, with a girth of four feet nine inches at the base, and four feet three inches at the top. It is rudely worked into almost a round. It has been conjectured that this stone, which now serves as a boundary stone, was a Roman milestone, and may have been taken from the Roman road above referred to. It stands in the garden of what was formerly known as Pond House, now replaced by a modern cottage, a little to the east of Heedless William's Pond.

In connection with this pond, which is situate upon what was formerly a part of the open heathland, at the bottom of Duddle Hill, there is a local tradition which may be worthy of notice. As the story goes the pond was said to be bottomless, and was doubtless formed in one of those natural deep depressions of which many exist on Puddletown Heath, some being filled with a dead, black-looking water containing shoals of lizards and tadpoles, whilst others, conical shaped, abound in vegetation, and are the abodes of numerous conies and wild birds.

“Heedless William” lived in the old coaching days, and is said to have received his nickname of “Heedless” from his reckless driving, and to have driven his coach-and-four one dark night down Duddle Hill into the pond, where team and coach and living freight were all engulfed, leaving only the top of his ground ash whip-stick, which remained in its socket, visible above the water.

A further tradition has been handed down to the effect that the whip-stick budded and became a tree, and now marks the spot where the incident occurred.

No. 3 stands at Stinsford Cross Roads, on the right-hand side of the highway, about one hundred yards beyond the first milestone from Dorchester. It is a limestone, probably Ridgway or Swanage, in the

form of a monolith measuring three feet six inches out of the ground, and girthing four feet two inches at the base, and three feet eight inches at the top. It is known locally as the "Bull-baiting Stone," and is said to have been at one time used for that purpose. In confirmation of this tradition there is, on the south-east side, three feet from the top, a deep groove about three inches wide, as if worn away by the chain fastened round it to which the animal may have been attached. This, too, may originally have been a Roman milestone, an opinion to which the late Mr. Henry Moule, M.A., curator of the Dorset County Museum, strongly inclined.

About twenty years since, when the crown of the hill was lowered, the stone was moved back some five or six feet, and refixed in its present position.

## STRATTON

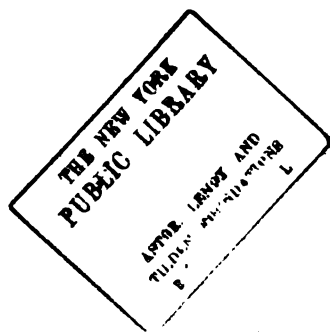
**A** FINE old late fourteenth-century cross (restored) stands west of the north porch of the church. It is of Ham Hill stone, and consists of two square steps, a socket, and an octagonal shaft, surmounted by a Latin cross, both of which are modern. The basement step is benched with a fine drip moulding, with a fillet, and has a bold plinth, the greater portion of which is buried in the ground. It measures seven feet three inches square, and is eighteen inches deep to the edge of the plinth. The second step is five feet five inches square and nine inches deep. The socket is very massive and octagonal in its upper bed, with bold convex broaches. It measures three feet six inches square at the base, by one foot eight inches deep. The shaft is probably shorter and less massive than the original, and it has been suggested that the head of the original cross may be seen on the

CHURCHYARD CROSS  
STRATTON









top of the gable at the east end of the nave. The restoration was carried out by subscription (to which Miss Ashley was a large contributor), in 1895, from designs prepared by Mr. G. R. Crickmay, the then diocesan architect and surveyor, from whose plans the church also (except the tower) was rebuilt a few years previously.

A paper by the writer, on the Stratton church and cross, will be found in the "Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club," vol. xvi, p. 1, 1895.

*On Grimstone Down*, which is in the parish of Stratton although part of the ancient manor of Grimstone, to the north of the Crossways leading to Cerne Abbas and Charminster, known as "Jackman's" Cross, is the socket of a cross of Portland or Ridgway stone two feet two inches square by twelve inches deep, with a mortise eleven inches by eight inches, into which formerly fitted a cross of wood. The upper bed of the socket is bevelled round the edge, and on one side is a cup-shaped cavity which might have been used for the reception of alms. There is a tradition that a man named Jackman was hanged on this cross early in the eighteenth century for sheep-stealing, but the writer has searched through the Court Rolls which are in his possession as lord of the manor,

and date back to 1640, and is unable to find any confirmation of this tradition.

In 1645 the manor belonged to the Prebend of Salisbury, and in earlier times to the Abbots of Milton.

The plate is from a photograph by Evans, Dorchester.

## STUDLAND

**A**T the cross roads at the entrance to the village, near the pathway leading over Barrow Down Hill to Swanage, may be seen the socket or pedestal of an ancient village cross. Little is known of this cross, and no mention of it is to be found in either of the county histories. The village stocks, within the memory of some of the older inhabitants, stood by the remains of the cross. The socket is bold in outline, and has a mortise into which a massive shaft appears to have been formerly fixed.

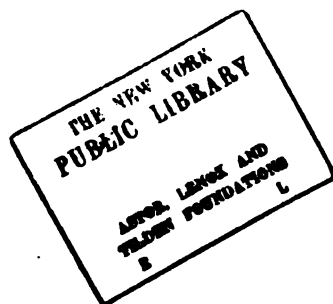
The date is exceedingly difficult to determine.

Mr. C. L. Robinson, M.A., in his "Royal Warren" (1882), pp. 116 and 117, gives the following very interesting description of this stone, which I take the liberty of quoting in full:

A curious antique block of tool-wrought stone marks the heart of the mediaeval village, the site of the holy cross. But the years are long since the cross itself was broken or decayed.

. . . The fragment is of the dark red sandy-stone,—its colour due to an oxide of iron,—that is plentifully found in the moors hard by, and forms the chief building material of the meaner cottages around. In shape it resembles a big circular cheese, more than four feet in diameter, and as high as a man's knee. In the top a square hollow shows where the cross was formerly fixed, and proves this mass to have been its pedestal. That this was placed where yet it stands before the huge overshadowing tree was more than a tender sapling, is hinted by the fact of the now great root having grown and swollen beneath, till at length it has tilted the stone up almost a foot on one side.

It may not be out of place here to refer the reader to the very interesting and instructive paper, "On the Work of Preservation of the Church of St. Nicholas, Studland," read by Mr. William Masters Hardy, before the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club, and contained in vol. xii, p. 164 of their "Proceedings," in which Mr. Hardy refers to a consecration cross carved in a north-east angle quoin of the church, about five feet above the plinth, another on the capital of a column in the interior at the same level, and to other crosses at different angles, in the chancel.



7







CHURCHYARD CROSS  
STURMINSTER MARSHALL

## STURMINSTER MARSHALL

**I**N the churchyard, to the west of the tower and near the spot where once stood a venerable yew tree, twenty-eight feet in circumference, said to have been blown down in 1832, now replaced by one of lesser growth, are the remains of what must once have been a very beautiful Perpendicular cross, probably fourteenth century.

They consist of a socket and shaft only, without a calvary, and may at one time have formed the upper portion of the village cross.

The socket is octagonal in its upper bed, and converted into a square below by bold convex broaches. It measures three feet six inches square at the base, by one foot four inches in height, but the stone is doubtless somewhat deeper, a portion being buried in the ground. The shaft is a square and slightly tapering monolith broken off at the top, six feet six inches in height, fifteen inches square at the base, tapering to nine inches

square at the top, set with lead into the mortise diagonally with the base. It has a roll at the angles interrupted by horizontal mouldings three feet six inches from the base.

The whole is of a reddish-coloured stone, probably Ham Hill, and is covered with moss and lichen, which adds much to its venerable appearance.

In the south porch of the church are two very interesting coffin slabs, one with a beautiful foliated cross in relief carved upon it. They are both in a fine state of preservation, and are said to have been found face down in the chancel when the church was practically rebuilt, about the year 1860, and were placed in their present position by the Vicar, the Rev. James Cross.

The plate is from a photograph by S. Gillingham, Stickland.

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MARKET CROSS  
STURMINSTER NEWTON

## STURMINSTER NEWTON

**O**N the site of the original market place, opposite the old "White Hart" Inn, are the remains of what would appear to have been a late thirteenth-century cross. It consists of a calvary of four steps, circular in plan, surmounted by a solid block of stone, also circular, thirty inches in diameter and fifteen inches deep, which could not have formed the socket of the original cross or carried the shaft as the mortise is wanting. The basement is eleven feet six inches in diameter, and the step fourteen inches deep and fourteen inches wide. The second step is ten inches deep and fourteen inches wide; the third nine and a half inches deep and thirteen inches wide; and the fourth eight and a half inches deep and twelve inches wide. The basement and steps are chiefly of a green sandstone, locally known as Melbury, with some few pieces of Ham Hill intermixed.

The interest of this work as a monument of antiquity is somewhat detracted from by the investigations lately made by the Vicar, the Rev. J. C. M. Mansel-Pleydell, who informs the writer that from inquiries made from old people in the village, he finds that the cross was "restored" or rather rebuilt about one hundred years ago, the necessary funds for the purpose being raised by a voluntary rate. Almost all new stone-work was introduced, and the old worn stones, which were Ham Hill, taken away, and the soft green sandstone or Melbury substituted, so that there appears to be hardly any of the original stone-work left. The restoration is supposed to have been on the old lines, the new work being an exact replacement of the old. This is to some extent confirmed by the several pieces of worked Ham Hill stone built in with the Melbury.

I have been unable to find any mention of this cross in either of the county histories, and cannot understand why so old and interesting a work as the original must have been, should have escaped notice.

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VILLAGE CROSS  
SYDLING ST. NICHOLAS

## SYDLING ST. NICHOLAS

THE remains of a fifteenth-century village cross, consisting of an octagonal base in which part of a very massive shaft is fixed, both of Ham Hill stone. It stands in the centre of the village, at the cross roads, near the Vicarage and the site of the old "Cross Tree."

The base in plan is a true, equal-sided octagon, measuring one foot six inches on each face by two feet deep, with a bold set-off. The upper bed, which was originally chamfered round the edge, is much worn, probably by succeeding generations of children running round it. The shaft, which is a somewhat tapering octagonal, formed of two solid blocks of stone mortised together, is four feet six inches high, is squared at the base by convex stops and set diagonally with the socket, into which it is run with lead. It measures one foot three inches square at the base. There is no indication of there ever



having been basement steps, although it is highly probable that a cross with a shaft of such large dimensions would have been set up on a calvary.

The old "Cross Tree," above referred to, was a venerable elm, with a hollow in the centre capable of containing several men; it was blown down in the winter of 1880, and replaced by another, which died, and the present tree, a "horse chestnut," was planted in the year 1900.

The village stocks, which formerly stood on the east side of the old "Cross Tree," were removed some time before the tree fell. The old people of the village can well remember them, and tell of a man being placed in them for twelve hours for some disorderly offence.

About half a mile north of the village, in Hutchins's time, there stood the remains of another cross, upon a small hillock at the cross roads from Cerne Abbas to Maiden Newton, and from Sydling village to Upper Sydling. A fragment of the shaft, upon one side of which there was a mutilated figure of a saint, remained above ground in 1812. This fragment, which was called "Mat's Cross" has now totally disappeared.

In Domesday Book the manor is surveyed in three parcels, one of which belonged to the Abbey of

Milton. Practically the whole of the manor now belongs to Winchester College.

The plate is from a photograph by Evans, Dorchester.

## TARRANT CRAWFORD

**S**ITUATE about a mile from the very interesting old parish church, at the cross roads known as "Crawford Cross," are the remains of what must at one time have been a very fine example of a wayside cross. They are of Ham Hill stone and consist of a base or socket-stone, two feet five inches square on the upper face, and fifteen inches deep with indications of broaches at the angles and a plinth at the foot.

What is left of the once handsome square shaft is one foot ten inches in height and seventeen inches square at the base, and is set diagonally with the socket, being securely mortised with lead. Evidences of a once bold moulding or roll at each angle of the shaft remain, somewhat similar to that on the Sturminster Marshall shaft. The stones are much worn from children climbing over them.

**ROADSIDE CROSS  
TARRANT CRAWFORD**







The work may be considered late fourteenth-century.

The pyramid appearing on the right in the plate is a heap of flints cracked ready for road mending.

The plate is from a photograph by Miss Hilda Pope.

In the Chancel of the curious little Church, standing in a field beyond the manor farm, are two very interesting coffin lids with crosses in relief carved upon them. One of the coffins may probably have contained the body of Robert Rouse, Knt., who by his will dated 1383 left certain benefactions to the Church of St. Mary "Tarent Craford," and ordered his body to be buried in the Abbey.



## TARRANT HINTON

**I**N a field behind the barn at the manor farm may be seen the socket of what must have originally been a very important wayside or village cross, and which is said to have stood at the cross roads, opposite the manor farm, still called Hinton Cross.

This socket is octagonal in its upper bed, and converted into a square below by bold convex broaches, carved or moulded in the centre with "claws," similar to those on the bases of the pillars in the church which is full of interest.

The stone measures two feet eleven inches square on its upper bed and is one foot five inches deep. Firmly bedded with lead into the mortise are the remains of a shaft thirteen inches square, cut off clean to the face of the socket, with which it is set square. Both are of a green sandstone, similar to that of which the tower of the church is built, and judging from the very unusual "claw" carvings on the broaches

corresponding with those on the bases of the pillars in the church, should be about the same date as the church, which the Rector, the Rev. E. I. H. Smith, puts at 1180.

## TARRANT MONKTON

**T**HE octagonal socket-stone only of an extremely massive village cross lies in the open space nearly opposite the church, but is said to have been moved back some feet from its former position about thirty years ago.

It is of Ham Hill stone, with the remains of a circular shaft, measuring sixteen inches in diameter, securely mortised into the socket, run with lead, and sawn off even therewith. The socket, which is a true octagon, measures one foot six inches on each octagonal face, and shows the remains of a bold overhanging drip and a plinth partly buried in the ground.

The stone is considerably worn, but is said to have been in much the same condition during the life of the oldest inhabitant.

Early fourteenth century.

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CROSS IN CHURCHYARD  
TODBERE

## TODBERE

**T**HE two sculptured stones of which the shaft of this cross is made up were discovered some years since, by a former Rector of Stower Provost with Todbere, in the churchyard at Todbere, and possibly may at one time have formed parts of a Saxon cross, and have been cut by Saxon monks.

The cross in its present form is quite modern, having been made up and placed in its present position in 1889 as appears from the date at the base of the shaft. There is little known locally as to the origin of these ancient stones, but Dr. Colley March, to whom I have submitted the plate, and who is no mean authority on Runic and Saxon sculptured designs, is of opinion that the two fragments are of early date, perhaps even of the eighth century, and that without doubt the carving represents the "true vine," that is Christ. On Christian crosses in Saxon times Runic designs were everywhere adopted and made to signify the



vine, the Tree of Life. "I am the true vine." Even the common "cable pattern" was so used.

In the lower fragment one sees a repeated cross with vineal coils, and within the coils a vine leaf is discernible. The upper fragment is of the same type, and may have come from the side of the same cross, the reversing spiral being treated in the usual manner, as a vine.

Runic crosses are not uncommon in Cornwall, and are of frequent occurrence in Scotland and Ireland, but I have been unable to discover another of this type in Dorset. There are Runic crosses in Bakewell churchyard, also at Eyam, both in Derbyshire; on each of these vineal coils are cut upon the front of the shafts in relief, and within the coils is a trefoiled leaf, somewhat similar to that on the lower fragment above described, both these crosses are considered to be Saxon.

The little church at Todbere is of early English character, consisting of a chancel and nave only, with a low tower, the entrance being on the south side. This church was probably preceded by a chapel of earlier date, possibly Saxon, which may account for these fragments of early sculptured stones.

## TYNEHAM

**I**N an angle formed by the meeting of the roads from Tyneham, Corfe and Warcham, is a worked stone of some antiquity.

It measures two feet five inches square at the base, and is nine inches deep. There is a mortise, circular at the top, but somewhat smaller and square at the bottom, into which a wooden wayside cross was doubtless at one time fitted. No vestige of it now remains.

These stone sockets or bases for wooden wayside crosses are not uncommon in some counties, but the only other instance of a similar type the writer knows of in this county is that at "Jackman's" Cross on Grimstone Down, which is referred to in this work under the heading of Stratton.

*In the vestry* at Tyneham church is an ancient stone cross about two feet in height. It was probably

a monumental cross, as on it is cut the following inscription:

I.H.S.—O R A T E—P. A I A.

M G I . . I R . . . . A S.

("Pray for the soul of Master Thomas.")

This certainly refers to a priest, and may probably have been a tombstone cross to Sir Thomas Mohun, Rector of Tynham, who died 1487.

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**CROSS IN CHURCHYARD**  
**WHITCOMBE**

## WHITCOMBE

**I**N the churchyard, a little to the west of the south porch of the church, is the stump of an octagonal shaft of an old cross, said to have been discovered during some excavations in the churchyard.

The Rev. W. M. Barnes considers it thirteenth-century work. (See "Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club," vol. xii, p. 53.) Some would put it of a later date.

It is of Portland or Swanage stone, about two feet eight inches in height, and twelve inches square at the base, slightly tapering towards the top. It is brought to a square at the base by mitre-stops, and is mortised into a solid block of Ridgway stone, twenty-seven inches square and twelve inches deep, bevelled round the upper edge.

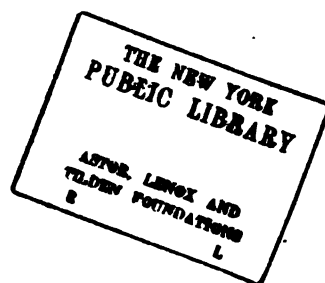
This base or socket-stone formed no part of the original cross, it is of a later date, and different workmanship from the shaft, which is badly fitted in the



socket, no lead being used. It inclines slightly towards the east, and appears to have sunk considerably in the mortise, the square portion of the base having almost disappeared.

The stones are covered with moss and lichen.

The plate is from a photograph by Miss Hilda Pope.







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SCULPTURED STONE IN CHURCH PORCH  
WINTERBORNE STICKLAND

## WINTERBORNE STICKLAND

**D**URING the restoration of the church, which is late Perpendicular, a rudely sculptured stone representing the Holy Rood, with the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John on either side, was discovered by Mr. W. J. Fletcher, the architect, built into the east wall of the porch, on the south side of the church, covered over with plaster. It is badly defaced, but sufficient is left of it to show that the Crucifixion is intended to be represented, with St. Mary on the one side, and St. John on the other. The figure of the Christ, which hangs low on the cross, is wrapped about the loins with folds of drapery. The head inclines to the right. The legs appear to be crossed in a cramped attitude, the one over the other, in such a position that both feet might be transfixed by one nail. Mr. Fletcher gave it as his opinion that this stone, which is in shape like half a tambourine, measuring two feet four inches at the base, by one

foot seven inches at the extreme height of the arch, originally formed the tympanum over the entrance door of the porch, and in support of this theory it may be mentioned that the flint and stone-work over this outside arch, for a space corresponding roughly with the size of the stone, appears to have been built in at a different time from the adjoining masonry. There is a bold chamfered moulding round the outside of the carving which would attest to the early date of the work.

These carved door-heads, or tympanums, are not common in this county. There is a good example within the south door of Tarrant Rushton Church, and another, perhaps better known, but of different shape and design, and probably older in date, over the outside of the south door of the church of Fordington St. George. Both these are fully described and clearly delineated in Hutchins.

*The Village Cross.*—In the centre of the village, at the junction of three roads, about fifty yards from the church, under the shadow of an ancient elm tree some sixteen feet in circumference, still known as "Cross Tree," stood the village cross. The village stocks are said to have stood near it on the north side, the culprit sitting on the base of the cross when confined. All that is now left of this ancient cross is the

much worn socket in Ham Hill stone, which is octagonal in its upper bed, and measures nine inches deep and fifteen inches on each face of its octagon, being brought to a square at its base by broaches now scarcely discernible.

Early fifteenth century.

The plate is from a photograph by Gillingham, Stickland.





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